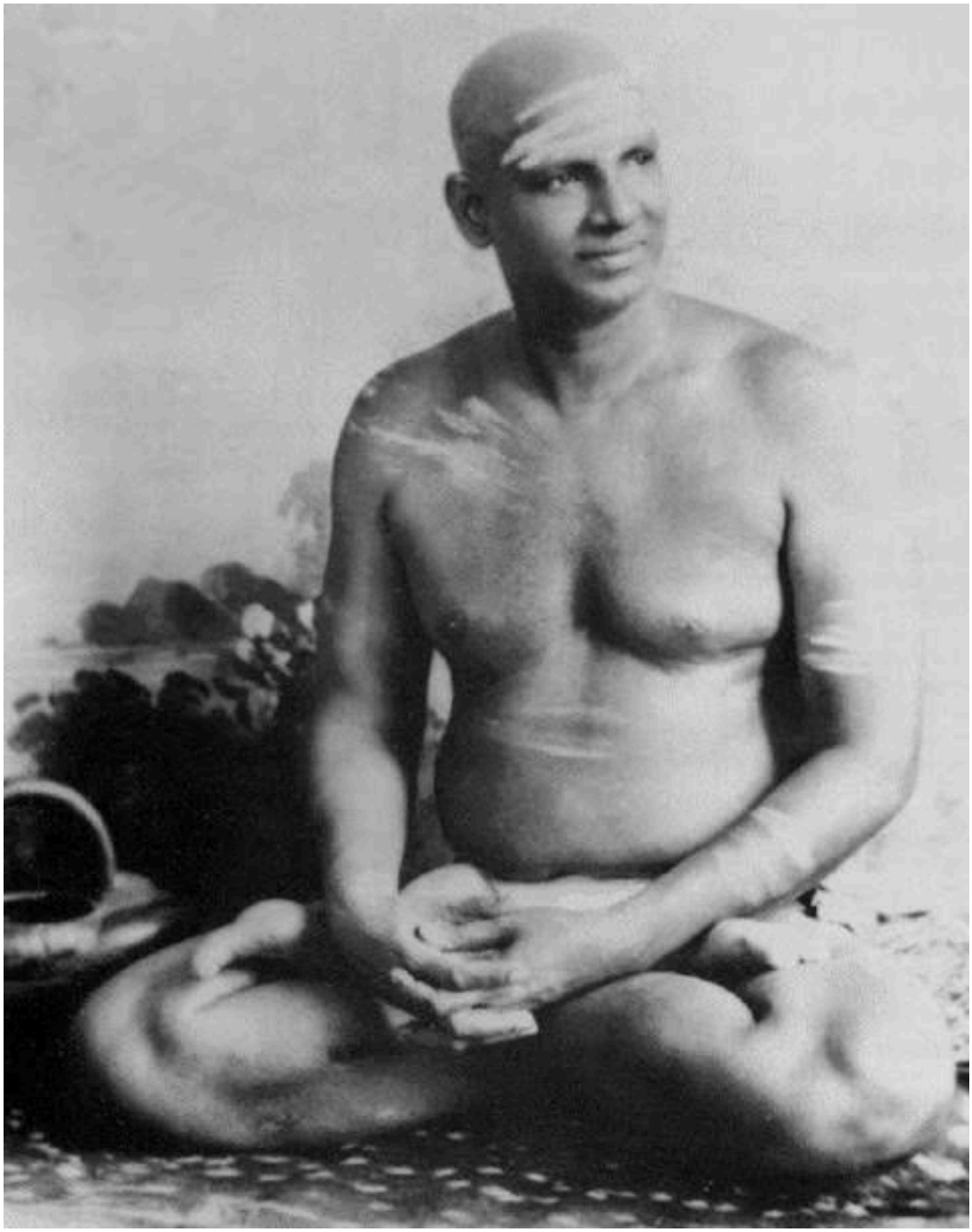

-----Index------

Publishers' Note

Introduction

Contents

What Is Divine Life

Divine Life

Religion

Essence of Gita

The Way of Attainment

Sadhana

Satsanga

Guru Is Necessary

Virtue and Vice

Pleasure and Pain

All about Mind

How to Control the Mind?

Sankalpa and Its Destruction

Ahamkara or Egoism

Way to Peace

Special Instructions

Karma Yoga

Practice of Karma Yoga

Anasakti Yoga

Bhakti Yoga

What Is Bhakti Yoga

Power of Prayer

Surrender and Grace

Raja Yoga
Elements of Raja Yoga
Vrittis
Ahimsa
Satya
Brahmacharya
Kriya Yoga
Pranayama
Concentration
Meditation
Obstacles in Meditation
Experiences in Meditation
Samadhi
Sleep and Samadhi
Other Yogas
Hatha Yoga
Asana Yoga
Benefits of Asanas
Kundalini Yoga
Lambika Yoga
Nada Yoga
Japa Yoga
Yogas of Synthesis
Jnana Yoga
Yoga of Wisdom
Nature of the Atman
Thy Real Nature

Maya
Nature and Workings of Maya
Avidya
Good and Evil
Puriashtaka Body
Bondage and Liberation
Bliss, Immortality, Freedom
Vivarta Vada
Vichara
Discrimination
Vairagya
Who am I?
Pranava or OM
Asparsa Yoga
Moksha or Final Blessedness
Immortality
Bliss Absolute
What Is Jivanmukti
Who Is a Jivanmukta?
Essence of Upanishads
Essence of Yoga Vasishtha
Gist of Vedanta
Upasamhara
Mokshapriya Addresses His Guru
Swami Sivananda to Mokshapriya

Publishers' Note

This small volume written by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj is appearing in print for the fourth time.

A study and, what is more important, diligent practice of the lessons, would convince the reader beyond all doubt that this small volume gives the essence of Yoga Sadhana in a most practical manner.

The simple, lucid, direct and forceful style that characterises Sri Swamiji's writings is born of more than a quarter of a century of Tapas, meditation, intense practical application of Yoga Sadhana, and sympathetic understanding of the aspirant's problems that Sri Swamiji Maharaj has been solving by his spiritual preceptorship to thousands all over the world.

May all the readers be spiritually illumined and be blessed with this unique book come from one great saint.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

Introduction

Who is Mokshapriya? Mokshapriya is a young seeker after Truth. He is a practical illustration of Sri Swami Sivanandaji's principle that one should renounce the world in youth. He has negatived the temptations of the flesh, the beckoning of Mara or Satan. He is a very quiet and peace-loving Sadhaka; and he has controlled the innate Rajas in man. He loves seclusion, and has set at naught the theory that man is a sociable animal. He is a thorough-going introvert; he has blinded himself to the false glittering of the sense-objects. He is convinced of the futility of seeking after anything mundane, and of the glory of seeking after a Brahma Vidya Guru. He has, therefore, resorted to the Bhumandala Sad Guru Sri Swami Sivanandaji; and today he shines in the lovely apparel of Tapas, Svadhyaya and Guru Seva.

Mokshapriya, in his (previous) life, comes of a very respectable family of Hyderabad. He is a Graduate in Mathematics. He stood first in the whole State. His teachers loved him; he captured their heart by his studiousness, keen intelligence, quick grasp and intense application. Even as a student he was considered a genius by his professors. He worked for sometime as a Mathematics teacher; and all students were eager to be his pupils! Then he gave up the job and devoted all his time to the study of philosophy and Yoga. This took him to the feet of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

Glory to Sri Mokshapriya through whom Sri Swamiji has given to the world his priceless Ananda Gita, even as Lord Krishna gave the Gita through Sri Arjuna. May all young men follow his example and become Mokshapriyas!

Swami Chidananda

Contents

Chapter I
WHAT IS DIVINE LIFE

Divine Life
Religion 16
Essence of Gita 17

Chapter II
WAYOF ATTAINMENT

Sadhana 21
Satsanga 22
Guru Is Necessary 24
Virtue and Vice 25
Pleasure and Pain 26
All aboutMind 28
How toControltheMind? 30
Sankalpa and Its Destruction 32
Ahamkara or Egoism 34
Way to Peace 36
Special Instructions 37

Chapter III
KARMA YOGA

Practice of Karma Yoga 39
Anasakti Yoga 40

Chapter IV
BHAKTI YOGA

What Is Bhakti Yoga 43
Power of Prayer 44
Surrender and Grace 46

Chapter V
RAJA YOGA

Elements of Raja Yoga 49
Vrittis 50
Ahimsa 52
Satya 54
Brahmacharya 55
Kriya Yoga 57
Pranayama 59
Concentration 61

Meditation 63
Obstacles in Meditation 64
Experiences in Meditation 66
Samadhi 68
Sleep and Samadhi 69

Chapter VI
OTHER YOGAS

Hatha Yoga 72
Asana Yoga 73
Benefits of Asanas 81
Kundalini Yoga 83
Lambika Yoga 84
Nada Yoga 86
Japa Yoga 88
Yogas of Synthesis 89

Chapter VII
JNANA YOGA

Yoga of Wisdom 92
Nature of the Atman 94
Thy Real Nature 95
Maya 97
Nature and Workings of Maya 99
Avidya 100
Good and Evil 101
Puriashtaka Body 103
Bondage and Liberation 104
Bliss, Immortality, Freedom 105
Vivarta Vada 107
Vichara 108
Discrimination 110
Vairagya 111
Who am I? 113
Pranava or OM 115
Asparsa Yoga 116
Moksha or Final Blessedness 119
Immortality 120
Bliss Absolute 121

What Is Jivanmukti 123
Who Is a Jivanmukta 125
Essence of Upanishads 126
Essence of Yoga Vasishtha 128
Gist of Vedanta 131

Chapter VIII
UPASAMHARA

Mokshapriya Addresses His Guru 134
Swami Sivananda to Mokshapriya 135

Chapter I
What is Divine Life

Divine Life

What is Divine Life? To shed the animal in Man, and to sublimate the human in him into the Divine; to express this sublimation in his daily, hourly life, in thought, word and deed--that is Divine life.

Mokshapriya said:

Tell me, Swamiji, what is divine life?

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya, divine life is life in God or Brahman or the pure Spirit.

To pray, to do Japa or recite the names of the Lord at all times, to sing His glory, to do Kirtan, to meditate on His form, Lilas and attributes, is divine life.
To speak the truth at all costs, to speak sweetly with love, to practise non-violence, celibacy, to behold the Lord in all forms is divine life.
To be ever in communion with the Lord by annihilating mine-ness and egoism through faith, devotion and self-surrender is divine life.
To study the Gita, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, the Yoga-Vasishtha, the Koran, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, and to follow the teachings contained therein is divine life.

O beloved disciple, feel His presence everywhere. Love all. Serve all. Be kind to all. Be tolerant. Be humble. Be pure. Be patient. Be forgiving. This is divine life.
Drive away Rajas (passion) and Tamas (inertia) and fill the mind with Sattva (purity). This is divine life.
Cultivate the divine virtues, straightforwardness; courage, serenity, generosity, mercy, self-restraint. This is divine life.
Keep up a balanced mind in success and failure, censure and praise, honour and dishonour, gain or loss, heat and cold. This is divine life.

O Mokshapriya, give up identification with the body, wife, children and property; identify yourself with the All-pervading, Immortal Brahman, and rest peacefully in Brahman. This is divine life.

Religion

Religion unites the individual soul with the Supreme Soul. Real religion is Self-realisation. Essentials of all religions are the same. Different religions are essential. Universal religion is LOVE.

Mokshapriya said:

O adorable Swamiji, speak to me on Religion.

Swami Sivananda answered:

O Mokshapriya, religion shows the way to Self-realisation of eternal life in Brahman.

O beloved aspirant, religion unites the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

Real religion, O Mokshapriya, is above mind and senses. Real religion is Self-realisation.

Know that life without religion, O Jijnasu, is a dreary waste and is real death.

O Mokshapriya, the fundamentals or the essentials of all religions are the same. Non-essentials or rituals only differ.

Each religion, O seeker after Emancipation, is suitable to that particular man who is in a particular state of evolution. Different religions are, therefore, essential.

O Mokshapriya, the universal religion is the religion of heart or love, the religion of Vedanta or Oneness.

O Adhyatmic hero, every religion teaches: there is one eternal, all-pervading, immortal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, self-luminous, timeless, spaceless, formless, birthless, deathless, all-blissful, all-peaceful, Supreme Being. Speak the truth. Love all. Serve all. Purify your heart. Never hurt others' feelings. Do not kill any creature. Be pure, observe celibacy. Be generous. Be merciful. Be charitable. Forgive the mistakes of others. Be tolerant. Control the senses and the mind. Concentrate. Meditate and attain God-realisation. Then alone, O Mokshapriya, can you be ever blissful and peaceful.

ESSENCE OF THE GITA

The Atman is Immortal. Abandon desire. Do selfless service. Meditate on Him. Recognise Him in His Vibhutis. Cultivate divine virtues. Balance the mind in Dvandvas. Do total self-surrender. You will attain Him.

Mokshapriya said:

O Gurudev! O Indweller of my heart; please in-struct me on the Gita.

Swami Sivananda replied:

There is an eternal, all-pervading, immortal Soul or Atman. It abides in the chambers of your heart. It is not slain even when the body is slaughtered.

If you abandon all desires, if you are satisfied in the Self alone, if you are free from passion, fear and an-ger, and all sorts of attachments, you will attain equi-poise and enjoy the eternal bliss of the Soul.

Thy business is with action only; never with its fruits. So, let not the fruits of action be thy motive, nor be thou to inaction attached.

He who abandons all desires and who is free from yearnings; who is without egoism and mine-ness he attains Eternal Peace.

The delights that are contact-born are verily wombs of pain, for they have a beginning and an end; not in them rejoice the wise.

Sit on Padma Asana or Siddha Asana or Sukha Asana. Keep the head, neck, and the trunk in a straight line. Close your eyes. Withdraw the senses. Fix the mind on the space between the eyebrows. Little by little attain tranquillity. Make the mind dwell on the Atman. Do not think of anything.

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer, whatever you give, whatever austerity you do, do it as an offering unto the Lord. The Lord is the Himalayas; He is the Ganga; He is the Asvattha tree; He is the mind; He is Sankara; He is Om; He is Time; He is the gambling of the cheat also.

Arjuna praises the Lord "Neither source, nor mid-dle, nor end; infinite force;

unnumbered arms, the sun and the moon Thine eyes; I see Thy face as sacrificial fire, blazing with splendour, illumining the worlds."

He who bears no ill-will to any being, is friendly and compassionate, without attachment and egoism, bal-anced in pleasure and pain and forgiving, is dear to the Lord.

Humility, unpretentiousness, harmlessness for-giveness, rectitude, service of the teachers, purity, steadfastness, self-control—all these divine virtues pave the way for the attainment of wisdom.

He who is balanced in pleasure and pain, self-reli-ant, to whom a lump of earth, a piece of stone and gold are alike, who loves alike his friends and foes, firm, alike in censure and in praise—he is said to have crossed over the dualities. He is a Gunatita.

This Samsara is the Asvattha tree with roots above and branches below; the leaves of the tree are hymns; the objects of the senses are its body. It is nour-ished by the qualities, or Gunas. Cut it by the unswerving weapon of non-attachment and attain Immortality.

Fearlessness, cleanliness of life, steadfastness in the Yoga practice, charity, self-restraint, sacrifice, study of the scriptures, austerity; straightforwardness, etc., are the divine qualities.

The food which increases vitality, energy, vigour, joy and cheerfulness is Sattvic, the food that is bitter, saline, too hot, pungent, dry and burning is Rajasic; that which is stale, putrid, corrupt and unclean is Tamasic.

Merge your mind in the Lord; become His devotee; sacrifice everything unto Him; prostrate before Him; you will surely attain Him. Abandoning all duties, go unto the Lord alone for shelter. Sorrow not. He will liberate you from all sins.

Wherever is Krishna (wisdom), Yogis' Lord, wherever is Partha (devotion), the archer, there exist prosperity, victory and happiness.

Chapter II

THE WAY OF ATTAINMENT

SADHANA

Sadhana is explained. Sadhana is the Way of Attainment. God is the Goal of Sadhana. Sadhana differs in details in the different Yogas.

Mokshapriya said:

O Yogi! Please instruct me on Sadhana.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Sadhana is any practice to steady the wandering mind and to fix it on God.

Sadhyam is that which is obtained by Sadhana. Sadhyam is God or Brahman. He who does Sadhana is called a Sadhaka.

Self-restraint is Sadhana. Purification of the mind is Sadhana. Abstraction is Sadhana. Vairagya is Sadhana. Dharana or concentration is Sadhana. Medi-tation is Sadhana. Cultivation of divine virtues is Sadhana. Prayer is Sadhana. Japa is Sadhana. Kirtan is Sadhana.

Sadhana should be regular and systematic. This is very important. it should be protracted. It should be done with great zeal, vigilance and diligence, patience and perseverance.

Sadhana differs in different Yogas. A Hatha Yogi lays great stress on Asanas, Pranayamas, Bandhas and Mudras. He tries to awaken the Kundalini, the great Sakti that lies dormant in the Muladhara and to take it to Sahasrara, the thousand-petalled lotus at the crown of the head.

A Bhakta cultivates the nine modes of devotion. He does Japa, Kirtan, and prayer. Faith and self-surren-der are the most important items in his Sadhana.

A Raja Yogi practises the eight limbs of Raja Yoga or Ashtanga Yoga, viz., Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Sam-adhi and enters into Asamprajnata Samadhi.

A Jnana Yogi practises the four means, viz., Viveka, Vairagya, Shat-Sampat and Mumukshutva. Then he practises Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana and attains Self-realisation.

O Mokshapriya! Be ever intent on Sadhana and at-tain the goal of life here and now.

SATSANGA

Satsanga is association with the wise. Without Satsanga the mind cannot be turned towards God. A moment's Satsanga is far superior to Tapas prac-tised for millions of years.

Mokshapriya said: O Bhagavan! Please instruct me now on Satsanga.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Satsanga is association with the wise. Live in the company of sages, saints, Sadhus, Yogis and Sannyasins; hear their valuable Upadesa or istruc-tions and follow them implicitly. This is Satsanga.

Without Satsanga this mind which is filled with worldly impurities cannot be turned towards God.

Vairagya or dispassion cannot be attained without Satsanga.

Satsanga is a formidable and impregnable fortress to protect the young aspirants from the temptations and the attacks of Maya in a variety of ways.

Satsangatve nisangatvam nisangatve nirmohatvam,

Nirmohatve nischalatattvam nischalatattve jivanmuktih.

If you attend the Satsanga of sages, you develop non-attachment and dispassion. If you get non-attach-ment, Moha or delusion perishes. If you conquer delu-sion, the mind becomes steady. It attains the steady, immovable, supreme Tattva or Brahman. If you realise Brahman, you attain Jivanmukti or the final Liberation.

Satsanga is a sentinel at the door of Moksha. If you make friendship with him, he will introduce you to his other friends, viz., Vichara (enquiry), Santi (peace) and Santosha (contentment), and you will attain Self-realisation quickly and easily.

In days of yore there was a dispute between Visvamitra and Vasishtha as to which was superior, Tapas or Satsanga. It was declared and proved by the Lord that a moment's Satsanga is far superior to Tapas practised in millions of years.

Lord Krishna taught to Narada through a beautiful story the benefits and importance of Satsanga. O Mokshapriya! Go through the book "Philosophical Stories. "You will have a clear understanding of the benefits of Satsanga.

GURU IS NECESSARY

He who has a Guru knows the Absolute Brah-man. A Guru alone can remove doubts, pitfalls and snares. Guru is Brahman or Isvara Himself.

Mokshapriya said:

Swamiji! Please tell me whether Guru is necessary or not.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! Guru is necessary.

Svetasvatara Upanishad emphatically declares: "He, who has devotion to the Lord and who has as much devotion to his Guru as he has towards the Lord, will realise the truths of the Upanishads. To him alone the Truth is revealed."

Chhandogya Upanishad boldly declares: "Acharyavan purusho veda"—He who has a Guru knows the Absolute Brahman.

Lord Krishna declares in the Gita: "Learn thou this, O Arjuna, by discipleship, by investigation and service to Guru. The wise, the seers of the essence of things, will instruct thee in wisdom" (Chapter IV-34).

Even in the study of secular science and worldly matters you need the help of a teacher. You cannot understand science, mathematics, algebra, geometry without the aid of a teacher. To know cooking, typing, etc., you need a teacher. Is it not much more necessary, then, to have a Guru in transcendental matters, when the aspirant has to walk along the rugged, thorny spiri-tual path?

A Guru alone can remove all your doubts, pitfalls and snares and inspire you. Guru's grace alone will sustain you in this perilous spiritual path which is as sharp as the edge of a razor.

Even Sri Sankara, Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Sri Ramanuja, and Ekanath, had their Gurus.

Guru is Brahman or Isvara Himself. His form should be meditated upon. His feet should be worshipped. His utterances are Mantras for recitation. His grace bestows emancipation on you.

Mokshapriya said: O Swamin! I now realise the necessity of a Guru. Salutations unto Thee again and again.

VIRTUE AND VICE

Virtue is Dharma; vice is Adharma. They are relative terms. That which takes you to God is virtue; that which binds you to Samsara is vice. Evil exists to glorify virtue. A vicious man can be trans-formed into a saint by Satsanga.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamiji! May I know what is virtue and what is vice?

Swami Sivananda answered:

Virtue is Punya or merit or good or Dharma. Vice is Papa or sin or demerit or Adharma.

Virtue and vice are relative terms. What is virtue at one time becomes a vice at another time. What is virtue in one place becomes a vice in another place. What is virtue to one is a vice to another.

That which elevates, that which bestows worldly prosperity and "Sreyas" or Salvation, Is virtue. That which hurls a man down in the abyss of ignorance is vice.

That which takes you to God is virtue; that which throws you in hell is vice.

That which gives you happiness and merit is virtue; that which gives you pain and demerit is vice.

That which makes you Sattvic is virtue; that which makes you Tamasic is vice.

That which makes you divine is virtue; that which makes you a devil is vice.

That which gives you strength, peace, inspiration is virtue; that which gives you worry, restlessness and depression is vice.

There is a raison d'etre or cause for the existence of evil. Evil exists to glorify virtue.

Evil is a negative good. Absence of virtue is vice.

A vicious man can be transmuted into a virtuous saint when he is in the company of the virtuous. A drunkard becomes a teetotaller in the company of a sober man. Rogue Ratnakar, Jaghai and Madhai who were rogues, became the greatest saints, through Satsanga.

O Mokshapriya! Acquire virtues and become a saint.

PLEASURE AND PAIN

Pleasure and pain are two kinds of sensations. Desire is the cause for pleasure. Pleasure is the womb of pain. You can convert vice versa. Develop endurance. Pleasure pain into pleasure and pain are illusory.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin, now speak to me about "Pleasure and pain."

Swami Sivananda replied:

Pleasure and pain are two kinds of Vrittis or modifications in the mind. They are two kinds of sensations.

During pleasure the mind expands; during pain the mind contracts.

Desire is the cause for pleasure. If there is no desire, there is no pleasure. A drunkard has desire for liquor and so he experiences a little nerve-titillation or pleasure for the time being. A sober man who has no desire for liquor gets disgust even at the sight of liquor. He has no craving at all for liquor.

Pleasure is the womb of pain. If you do not want to experience pain, give up pleasure.

If you do not get tea, you experience pain. The mind remembers the plea-sure it enjoyed when you took tea and now it experiences pain through memory of past pleasure when you do not get tea. If you do not want this pain, give up the tea-habit.

Pleasure and pain are relative terms. You can convert pleasure into pain and pain into pleasure.

Look into the defects of sensual life. Live in the company of saints and sages. Study books which treat of Vairagya or dispassion such as "Necessity for Sannyasa," "How to Get Vairagya, ' and "Vairagya Mala." All the pleasure-giving sensual objects will give you pain now.

Develop endurance. Remember always, O Mokshapriya: "Pain is the best silent teacher. Pain is a blessing in disguise. Pain turns the mind towards God." Pain will be a pleasure now.

Milk gives pleasure to some and pain to others. The fourth cup of milk causes retching or vomiting. If there is real pleasure in milk, all should experience a homogeneous pleasure as in deep sleep. In reality there is no pleasure in objects.

Mango is not sweet. It is the imagination that gives sweetness, O diligent seeker!

Pleasure and pain are illusory products of Maya. Sensual pleasure also is reflection in the mind of that pure, eternal Bliss of Brahman or the Absolute.

Do not be duped by the mind and the senses. Do not run after these deceptive illusory sensual pleasures, mere shadows. Realise the real Substance, the eternal Bliss of Brahman which is beyond the reach of the mind and the senses and be happy for ever, O Mokshapriya!

ALL ABOUT MIND

Mind is the dividing wall between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. Mind creates this universe. Objectively it is the universe. Slay the mind through destruction of Vasanas, Pranayama and Brahma-Vichara. You will attain Self-realisation.

Mokshapriya said:

Gurudev! May I know all about mind in a nutshell?

Swami Sivananda answered:

Mind is Atma-Sakti. It is born of Prakriti. It is the principle of thinking and sensation.

Mind connects itself with the five senses of perception and enjoys all sensual objects.

Mind is the dividing wall between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. If the mind is destroyed the individual soul becomes identical with the Supreme Soul.

If the modifications of the mind which lean towards sensual pleasures are destroyed, then the individual soul attains Supreme Peace.

Mind is a bundle of Vasanas, Sankalpas, and likes and dislikes. If you free yourself from these, the mind dwindles into an airy nothing.

It is the mind that creates this universe. "Mano-matram jagat; Manah-kalpitam jagat."

In deep sleep there is no mind. Therefore, there is no world also in deep sleep.

Dispassion, discrimination, . renunciation, and meditation are all enemies of the mind.

You can destroy the mind easily, if you possess these virtues.

The mind manifests itself as the external world in the shape of pains and pleasures.

The mind subjectively is consciousness, while objectively it is this universe.

The mind has the potency of creating or undoing the word in the twinkling of an eye.

Slay this mind, O Mokshapriya, through the destruction of the Vasanas (desires) or the control of the Prana and Brahma-Vichara (enquiry into the nature of Brahman). Meditate on the innermost self ceaselessly. The mind will be absorbed in Brahman. You will attain Self-realisation.

HOW TO CONTROL THE MIND?

How to control the mind? Eradicate all desires and thoughts. Do not use violent methods. Use intelligent methods. Grace of God and Guru is neces-sary. Control the mind through Yoga, Jnana, Bhakti and Nishkama Karma.

Mokshapriya, said:

O Lord! Please tell me the methods to control the mind. The mind is very turbulent. It is very mischievous. It is ever jumping like a monkey, which has drunk wine, and which is bitten by a scorpion.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya, I shall give you suitable methods to control this mind.

Mind is a bundle of Vasanas and thoughts. It has attraction and repulsion, likes and dislikes. It is filled with egoism and cravings. It is born of ignorance.

If you eradicate all desires and thoughts, it will die by itself. Vairagya (dispassion) and

Abhyasa (concentration and meditation) are the weapons to
annihilate this turbulent mind.
Do not use any violent methods to control the mind. You will lose your energy and weaken the will. Use intelligent methods to curb the mind.
Mind cannot be controlled by mere human efforts. The grace of the Lord and the Guru is necessary. Pray fervently. Surrender completely to the Lord. You will surely obtain His grace.

You can control the mind through Yoga and Jnana. For some it is easy to control the mind through Yoga and Jnana. For some it is easy to control the mind through Yoga, for some through Jnana or wisdom.

Enquire "Who am I?" Do Brahma-Vichara. Enquire into the nature of the Absolute. Meditate ceaselessly on the all-pervading, immortal, innermost Atman or the Self. The mind will be absorbed into its Source.

O Mokshapriya, you can control the mind through the practice of Bhakti Yoga. This is easier than the practice of Raja Yoga or Jnana Yoga. Do Japa Yoga. Sing the Lord's glory. Cultivate the nine modes of devotion.

Nishkama Karma Yoga is another method. It will purify the mind and lead to the descent of divine grace and divine light.
Temperaments, tastes, and proclivities differ. Hence various Yogas are necessary to control the mind and to attain Immortality and Eternal Bliss.
O Mokshapriya, you are fit for the practice of Bhakti Yoga. You have a good heart and you are emotional, too.

SANKALPA AND ITS DESTRUCTION

Life of mind is Sankalpa. Sankalpa is Samsara, Control your thoughts. Annihilate Sankalpas. Attain, God-realisation. Be indifferent to material objects.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin! Please throw some light on Sankalpa and its destruction.

Swami Sivananda answered:

O Mokshapriya! Sankalpa is thought. This is the function of the mind. The life of the mind is Sankalpa. The Svabhava of the mind is Sankalpa.

Tamasic Sankalpa generates pain. It is base.

Rajasic Sankalpa leads persons naturally into the mundane existence.

The pure Sattvic Sankalpa leads to good or virtuous actions, Jnana or wisdom and salvation.
It is only Sankalpa destroyed beyond resurrection that constitutes the immaculate Brahmic Seat of ineffable effulgence and splendour.
Sankalpa only is Samsara. Its destruction is Moksha or the final emancipation.

If you are Sankalpa-less, you will attain Self-realisation very easily.

Free yourself from all desires. Steady your impure mind through your pure mind.
Then eradicate all Sankalpas.
You will be able to attain Moksha or the final beatitude only through the annihilation of Sankalpa.
Therefore, O Mokshapriya, endeavour to destroy this Sankalpa and attain the immortal Bliss of Brahman or the Absolute, devoid of pains and heterogeneity.
Sankalpa is destroyed with the control of thoughts. The highest goal can be attained through the extinction of Sankalpa.
Sankalpa arose through Ajnana or nescience. Do not contemplate upon the objects of the world. Observe silence towards material pleasures.
The seed of ignorance or Ajnana is the sprout of Sankalpa alone.

One Sankalpa multiplies and increases prodigiously. The Sankalpa of tea multiplies in a minute. Then come the Sankalpas of tea, sugar, milk, tea-cups, tables, table-cloth, biscuits, fruits, etc.

Think of objects; entertain sensual desires; then Sankalpa reigns supreme.

Rising from a small beginning, the Sankalpa gradually increases and clouds the one, clear, self-luminous Atman. Man forgets all about his divine nature. He identifies himself with the body and eternal objects.

You will be able to attain the stainless Moksha only through the firm path of the annihilation of Sankalpa.

On the string of Sankalpa, countless thoughts are strung like so many beads. If the string is cut to pieces, the illusory thoughts, which are strung on it, will disappear at once.

O Mokshapriya! Annihilate all Sankalpas through meditation on your innermost Atman and attain the immortal, eternal Bliss here and now.

AHAMKARA OR EGOISM

Ahamkara or egoism is generated through delusion. Ahamkara. Ahamkara is the greatest enemy. Ahamkara can be destroyed by Jnana only. Destroy the idea of I at the very root. Sattvic Ahamkara will not bind you.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin! May I know what is this Ahamkara?

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! Hearken. Ahamkara is I-ness or `egoism'. This is generated through delusion. It permeates the Jiva or the individual soul all throughout.

It is only through Ahamkara that all the mental cares, dangers and the ever-increasing actions of life arise.

There is no enemy greater than Ahamkara.

Ahamkara is born of Ajnana or ignorance. The real secret of divine life lies only in the renunciation of this dire Ahamkara.

So long as this Ahamkara beclouds you, so long the flowers of desires bloom and abound in you.

This baneful Ahamkara is the source of all dangers in this world. It is evanescent. It has its seat in the mind. It is foolish and stupid in its nature. It is without due discrimination and intelligence.

It is one of the five afflictions that are enunciated in Raja Yoga.

Raga and Dvesha (like Ra and dislike) are its off-springs.

If the cloud of Ahamkara called 'I' screens the sun of Jnana then the lily of Brahman which is 'Non-l' will never bloom.

The original sprout of the painful Ahamkara with its tender stem of rebirths ramifies itself everywhere with its long branches of 'mine' (meurn) and 'thine' (teum) and yields its unripe fruits of hell and all sorts of pains, sufferings and sorrows.

This tree of Ahamkara can be destroyed to its root by Jnana (wisdom) fire only.

The idea of 'I' which contains all frailties, is the seed of the tree of mind. The sprout which is at first generated from this seed of Ahamkara, is termed Buddhi or intellect. From this sprout the ramifying branches called Sankalpas (thoughts) take their origin.

Manas (mind), Chitta (subconscious mind) and Buddhi (intellect) are but the different names or qualities of the one Ahamkara.

If you destroy the idea of 'I' at the root of the tree (mind), then it will not again spring up.

Atma-Jnana or the knowledge of the true nature of 'I' is the fire which destroys this egoism.

"Aham brahma asmI "I am Brahman" or identification with the Supreme Being is Sattvic Ahamkara. This Sattvic Ahamkara will not bind you. On the contrary, it will help you to cross this Samsara and attain Moksha or emancipation.

O Mokshapriya! That Ahamkara which makes you identify yourself with the body of flesh and bone is the cause of the poisonous tree of rebirth and dire pains.

Destroy it by cultivating the Sattvic Ahamkara "I am Brahman," and enjoy the immortal Bliss of the Eternal.

WAY TO PEACE

Silence is Peace. When mind ceases functioning you will enjoy Supreme Peace. Truth is the gate-way to the Kingdom of Peace. Other Sadhanas for attainment of Peace.

Mokshapriya said:

O blessed Guru, please instruct me on Peace.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O dear immortal child, Silence is Peace. When the mind ceases functioning, when all desires are extirpated, when the senses are withdrawn in the mind, you will enjoy the Supreme Peace of the Eternal.

Hey Saumya, this Innermost Atman that lies concealed in the chambers of your heart is an embodiment of Peace.

Attain this peace, O Mokshapriya, through desirelessness, discrimination and constant meditation on the ever-peaceful Atman which abides in the chambers of your heart.

To enjoy the Supreme Peace, O Atma-Samrat, you should be humble, pure, forgiving, tolerant, unselfish, I-less, mine-less, generous and charitable.

O blessed Divinity, be truthful. Truth is the gateway to the Kingdom of Peace. Draw inspiration from the lives of saints who led a life of Truth and penance.

O Mokshapriya, self-control, self-restraint and self-denial are necessary for the attainment of Supreme Peace. Develop these virtues to the maximum degree.

O beloved Sadhaka bold, kill this jealousy, the enemy of peace, through complacency, magnanimity and nobility. Be compassionate towards people who are in distress. Serve them, O Mokshapriya. Be indifferent to-wards evil-doers. Be friendly towards all. Thus enjoy the everlasting Peace of the Soul.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Nil desperandum. Overcome difficulties. Failures are stepping-stones to success. Watch your speech. Let your thoughts be clean. Persevere. Giving is the secret of abundance. Cultivate attention. Constantly repeat inspiring verses from the Gita or some Mantras. Other precious instructions.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin! Give me some special instructions on Sadhana.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Difficulties exist only so that you may grow strong by overcoming them. Overcome them one by one patiently.

if you fail ten times, do not despair; if you fail a hundred times, do not be disheartened, if you fail a thou-s and times, rise up and march on boldly. Failures are indeed stepping-stones to success.

Watch your speech. Watch every word. Speak no word that is impure or vulgar or can affect the feelings of others.

Never allow an unclean thought to enter your mind; if it enters your mind, drive it out at once. Purify your mind, so that no impure thought may be able to gain entrance.

Strengthen your resolve. Patiently persist in your Sadhana. Intensify your dispassion and yearning for liberation.

Destroy your personal element. Forgive those who harm you. Give love for hatred. Overcome evil by good.

Resist the promptings of the lower nature. Make your body your obedient servant, your slave.

Do not give up your Sadhana, simply because you do not have progress. Struggle as long as you can each time, and you are nearer to success.

Give, give, give constantly. Giving is the very nature of love. Giving expands and purifies the heart. Ask for no return, no gratitude. Where there is no free giving, there is no place for God. Giving is the secret of abundance.

Interest and attention will strengthen your will. Cultivate attention to a considerable degree.

Constantly repeat some inspiring verses from the Gita and the Upanishads or some Mantras such as Om Satchidananda, Om Namo Narayanaya. This will be your divine background of thought or a shield to counteract objectionable impure thoughts.

O Mokshapriya! Follow these instructions. You are sure to attain Self-realisation here and now.

Chapter III

KARMA YOGA

PRACTICE OF KARMA YOGA

Gist of Karma Yoga: Cultivate Atma Bhava or Narayana Bhava. A Karma Yogi should develop several divine qualities. Service with right attitude is Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga elevates man to Divinity and Unity.

Mokshapriya said:

O Gurudev! Please instruct me on Karma Yoga. Swami Sivananda said:

Karma Yoga is the Yoga of selfless service. It purifies the heart and leads to the descent of divine grace and dawn of wisdom of the Self.
Do not expect the fruits of your actions. Give up agency or doership. Feel that you are an instrument in the hands of the Lord and that God does everything. Be balanced in success and failure. Be not attached to the not actions themselves. This is the gist of Karma Yoga.

When you serve others, feel that you are serving the Lord in them, or your own Self. Combine Bhakti Yoga or Jnana Yoga with Karma Yoga.

A Karma Yogi should develop all these virtues: adaptability, humility, selflessness, self-sacrifice, serenity, courage, self-reliance, sincerity, cosmic love, mercy, Compassion, poise, etc.

A selfish, lazy, cunning man is unfit for the practice of Karma Yoga.

A Karma Yogi must be a Dhira or a hero. He will come across various difficulties and obstacles. He must. Conquer them one by one boldly with an undaunted spirit.

Do charity. Serve the sick. Serve the poor. Serve the country. Serve your parents. Serve any social or spiritual institution. Keep up always the right Bhava or right mental attitude and the right spirit. Do not perform any action mechanically.

Spiritualise all your actions. Every action becomes a Yogic activity or an offering unto the Lord. When it is performed with the right Bhava or spirit. Bhava is very important in the practice of Karma Yoga.

Karma Yoga is a leveller. It removes all illusory distinctions and differences, and leads to unity and Advaitic feeling of oneness. It removes inertia and idle-ness and gives you good health.

O Mokshapriya! Plunge yourself in the practice of Karma Yoga or the Yoga of Selfless Service.

Glory to Karma Yoga, which elevates a man to divinity and unity.

ANASAKTI YOGA

Abandon attachment to the fruit of action. Do not hope for anything. Free yourself from the pairs of opposites. Be balanced in success and failure. Fix the mind on the innermost Atman. Destroy attachment. This is Anasakti Yoga which will liberate you.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swami! What is Anasakti Yoga? Please en-lighten me on this Yoga.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Aasakti is attachment. Man gets attached to the objects of the world and is bound thereby. He takes birth after birth and is caught in the wheel of Samsara.

Attachment is death. Non-attachment is eternal life.

Anasakti is the opposite of Asakti. Anasakti is non-attachment.

Aasakti is destroyed by Vairagya (dispassion) and Viveka (discrimination between the real and the unreal).

Look into the defects of sensual life such as birth, death, disease, old age, impermanence, pain, sorrow, misery, cares, worries, anxieties, fears, etc. You will develop Anasakti or non-attachment.

A worldly man cannot work without agency and expectation of fruits. Even if he gives a glass of water to another man, he expects something, some thanks, some appreciation, some praise, some smile at least.

If you abandon attachment to the fruit of action, if you are ever contented, if you consecrate the fruits of your actions and the actions themselves to the Lord, you will

attain emancipation. Actions will not bind you. You are not doing anything although doing actions. This is Anasakti Yoga.

Do not hope for anything. Control the mind and the senses. Give up greed and desire. You do not commit any sin although you perform actions. This is Anasakti Yoga.

Free yourself from the pairs of opposites. Be bal-anced in success and failure. Destroy envy. Though you perform actions, you are not bound. This is Anasakti Yoga.

Destroy attachment. Be harrnonious. Fix the mind on the Innermost Atman. Now all your actions will melt away. You will not be bound. You will attain salvation. This is Anasakti Yoga.

O Mokshapriya! Practise this Yoga, purify your heart and attain the goal of life.

Chapter IV

BHAKTI YOGA?

WHAT IS BHAKTI YOGA

That Yoga through which the devotee unites himself with the Lord is Bhakti Yoga. Anyone can practise Bhakti Yoga. Devotion and earthly desire cannot exist side by side. Sakama Bhakti too will be transformed into Nishkama Bhakti. Para-Bhakti and Jnana are one.

Mokshapriya said: O Bhagavan! Please instruct me now on 'What is Bhakti Yoga.'

Swami Sivananda replied: O Mokshapriya! Just listen with rapt attention. Bhakti is devotion unto the Lord. That
Yoga through which the devotee unites himself with the Lord is Bhakti Yoga.
Prayer, Japa, Kirtan, remembrance, worship Bhakti, meditation, self-surrender are all Angas or limbs of Bhakti Yoga.
Bhakti Yoga is easier than Kundalini Yoga, Raja Yoga or Jnana Yoga. Anyone can practise Bhakti Yoga. Anyone can sing the names and glories of the Lord
All worldly Vasanas or mundane desires and ambitions must be destroyed. Then alone will devotion grow in one's heart. Devotion and earthly desire cannot exist side by side. They are like light and darkness.

Prahlada alone had Nishkama Bhakti from the very beginning. He wanted nothing but God. Dhruva had Sakama Bhakti. He wanted dominion. But as soon as he had Darsana or vision of the Lord, that desire vanished. The vast majority of persons will have Sakama Bhakti only, in the beg inning. But the Sakama Bhakti will soon be changed into Nishkama Bhakti through the grace of the Lord.

There are five kinds of Bhava or mental attitude in Bhakti Yoga. They are: Santa-Bhava, Dasya-Bhava, Vatsalya-Bhava, Sakhya-Bhava and Madhurya-Bhava.
There are nine modes of devotion: Sravana, Kirtana, Smarana, Padasevana, Archana Vandana Dasya, Sakhya and Atma-Nivedana. A Bhakta gets Krama Mukti or gradual

emancipa-tion. He goes to Brahma-Loka and then enters into Nirguna Brahman along with Brahma at the end of a Maha-Kalpa or the great Pralaya or deluge.

Para-Bhakti is supreme Bhakti. Para-Bhakti and Jnana are one. The Devotee of Para-Bhakti does not perform any rituals. He beholds his Lord everywhere. The whole world is the Svarupa of the Lord.

O Mokshapriya! Practise Bhakti Yoga assiduously. Bhakti Yoga is suitable for the vast majority of persons. Your temperament also is suitable for this path.

POWER OF PRAYER

Prayer is a spiritual tonic. Prayer should come from the heart. Prayer is more powerful than reasons. Pray for devotion and communion. Mass-prayer is a mighty force.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamiji! May I know about the power of prayer?

Swami Sivananda replied:

Prayer elevates, inspires, redeems. Through prayer divine grace and divine light descend.

Prayer is a spiritual food for the soul. Prayer is a spiritual tonic.

Prayer is a Master-key to open the realms of Elysian Bliss.

Prayer helps the devotee to be in tune with the Infinite.

Prayer should come from the innermost recess of the heart. Then alone will it be heard at once.

Prayer moves mountains. Prayer works wonders. The power of prayer is ineffable.

Through prayer the devotee enters a realm where reason dares not enter. Through prayer the devotee sits by the side of the Lord.

Prayer expands the heart. Prayer purifies the heart. Prayer is a powerful spiritual injection. It fills the heart with immense power and strength. Every religion has its own prayer.

Pray in the early morning. It is more effective. Pray at all times. Let prayer become habitual, your second nature.

Pray not for wealth, position. wife and children and success in lottery and horse-race. It is mean and deplorable. Ask for Darsana of the Lord. Pray for devotion and communion.

Recite the beautiful Upanishadic prayer in the morning and at night: "Asato ma sat gamaya, Tomaso ma jyotirgamaya, Mrityorma amritam gamaya—Lead me on from unreal to Real, from darkness to Light, from mortality to Immortality."

Common mass-prayer is very inspiring. A huge spiritual current is generated during mass-prayer.

Gayatri Japa is a prayer. The devotee asks for illu-mination of the intellect so that he can know his real, es-sential divine nature. "Dhiyo yo nab prachodayat-May He enlighten our intellect." This is an unselfish prayer.

Mrityunjaya Mantra Japa also is a prayer. It is a prayer to Lord Siva. The devotee asks "Free me from bondage and death. Make me immortal."

O Mokshapriyal Go through the book "Gems of Prayers." It contains a thousand and one prayers, There are common or universal prayers, etc. It is an in-spiring book.

SURRENDER AND GRACE

Through surrender the devotee becomes one with the Lord. His will becomes the Cosmic Will. The more complete the surrender, the greater the descent of God's Grace. The Lord's Grace Is explained.

Mokshapriya said:

Swamiji! Please teach me now about Surrender and Grace.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! Surrender is Isvarapranidhana The devotee consecrates all his works and their fruits to the Lord

He has no will of his own. He says unto the Lord "I am Thine. All is Thine. Thy will be done. Thou art just. Thou dost everything for me. I am an instrument in Thy hands."

In surrendering one's will to the Lord, his will be-comes one with the Cosmic Will. He becomes one with the Lord. There is no loss in surrendering one's will to the Lord.

Self-surrender is Atma-Nivedana, or Prapatti. This is the highest Bhakti. The Gopis of Vrindavan, Radha and Mira surrendered everything at the feet of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna was their all.

In Kathopanishad it is said "The Lord chooses that man who has surrendered himself, reveals Himself unto him and bestows the highest Wisdom on him."

The greater the intensity of surrender, the more the descent of Lord's grace. The descent of grace is in direct proportion to the degree of self-surrender.

The two obstacles to self-surrender are egoism and desire. Egoism and desire wage guerilla war. They assume various forms and assail the devotee again and again.

O Mokshapriya! Be on the alert. e ever vigilant. Slay the egoism and desires beyond resurrection. Then alone will you be safe.

Your Sadhana Sakti is grace of the Lord. Guru is grace of the Lord. Removal of obstacles and snares is the grace of the Lord. Sticking to the spiritual path is grace of the Lord. Progress in Sadhana is grace of the Lord. Revelation or intuition is grace of the Lord. Descent of divine light is grace of the Lord

Human birth is Lord's grace. All sorts of aids to Sadhana you get such as Kutir, food, clothing, medical aid, good place for meditation, books, Satsanga, etc,,,,, are His grace only, O Mokshapriya!

Chapter V

RAJA YOGA

ELEMENTS OF RAJA YOGA

The eight limbs of Raja Yoga explained. Raja Yoga and Hatha Yoga compared. Raja Yogi stresses the control of mind.

Mokshapriya said:

O Master! May I have your instructions on Raja Yoga?

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! Raja Yoga is the king of all Yogas. It is also called Ashtanga Yoga or the Yoga with eight limbs.

The eight limbs are Yama (self-restraint), Niyama (observances), Asana (pose), Pranayama (regulation or restraint of breath), Pratyahara (abstraction of the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi (superconscious state). Abhyasa (practice) and Vairagya (dispassion) are the two means here to control the mind. The practice should be continued for a long time with great zeal and faith.

Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truthfulness) Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (celibacy), and Aparigraha (non-covetousness) are the five limbs of Yama or self-restraint.

Saucha (purity), Santosha (contentment), Tapas (austerity), Svadhyaya (study of sacred scriptures) and lshvarapranidhana (surrender to the Lord) are the five limbs of Niyama or observance.

Yama and Niyama are the foundations of Raja Yoga. No success in Raja Yoga is possible without the practice of Yama and Niyama.

A Raja Yogi lays great stress on meditation while a Hatha Yogi emphasises the practice of Asana, Bandha, Mudra and Pranayama.

A Hatha Yogi starts the Sadhana from the body and Prana, while a Raja Yogi begins his Sadhana from the mind.

Hatha Yoga is the counterpart of Raja Yoga. Where Hatha Yoga ends, Raja Yoga begins.

A keen intellect is necessary for the practice of Raja Yoga. A good physique is needed for the practice of Hatha Yoga.

Raja Yoga is a great aid for the control of mind and its Vrittis.

O Mokshapriya! The Yoga of Synthesis is suitable in this age. Get help from all Yogas. Have one Yoga as the basis.

VRITTIS

Vrittis explained: Santa, Ghora and Mudha Vrittis. Yoga is the restraint of the Vrittis. Do not identify yourself with the Vrittis and attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Mokshapriya said:

O Blessed Gurudev! I am drinking again and again thy immortal nectar of instructions. There is no satiety for me. My doubts are vanishing. Please instruct me now on "Vrittis."

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! A Vritti is a whirlpool in the mind-lake. It is a thought-wave in the ocean of mind. A Vritti is an imagination or Sankalpa.

The knowledge obtained through a Vritti is Vritti-Jnana. It pertains to the 'objects of this world. It is worldly wisdom.

There are three kinds of Vrittis, viz., Santa Vritti, Ghora Vritti and Mudha Vritti.

When Sattva Guna prevails in the mind, Santa (peaceful) Vritti arises. A desire to do Japa, Meditation, study of sacred scriptures, etc., is Santa Vritti.

If passion or Rajas predominates in the mind, Ghora (terrible) Vritti arises.

If Tamas preponderates in the mind, Mudha Vritti arises. Carelessness, laziness, indolence, stupidity are all Mudha Vrittis.

Yoga is Chitta-Vritti-Nirodha: Yoga is restraint on f the mental modifications. This is the second Mantra in Raja Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi. Then the Yogi rests in his own Svarupa or essen-tial divine nature.

On other occasions he identifies self with other Vrittis of the mind such as anger, lust, pride, greed, etc.

Vrittis are of two kinds according to Raja Yoga, painful (Klishta) and painless (Aklishta).

The painless Vrittis are of five kinds, viz., Pramana (right knowledge), Viparyaya (wrong knowledge), Vikalpa (imagination), Nidra (sleep) and Smriti (memory).
The painful Vrittis are of five kinds, viz., Avidya (ignorance) Asmita (self-sense) Raga (love), Dvesha (hatred) and Abhinivesa (love of life and fear of death).
Do not identify yourself with the Vrittis. Be a Sakshi or silent witness of the Vrittis. Be indifferent. You can control the Vrittis and attain Atma-Jnana.
If there is only one Vritti of God, it is Savikalpa Samadhi. If there is no Vritti at all, it is Nirvikalpa Samadhi.
O Mokshapriya! Annihilate all Vrittis. Identify your-self with Brahman. Become a Brahma Jnani.

AHIMSA

Ahimsa is the greatest virtue. Ahimsa is the weapon of the strong. It cannot be practised by weaklings. Ahimsa is Supreme Love. Methods of eradicating violence. Try again and again. Nil desperandum. Study lives of Saints.

Mokshapriya said:

Revered Swamiji, I am much benefited by Your " Upadeshamrita. Kindly instruct me now on Ahimsa or non-violence.
Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya, Ahimsa is non-injury in Thoughts word and deed. It is the greatest divine virtue Ahimsa pararno Dharmahnon—violence is the highest Dharma or duty.
It comes first in Raja Yogic Yama, viz., Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha.
If one is established in Ahimsa, all the other virtues come by themselves. In the presence of such a Yogi all enmities vanish. A tiger and a cow, a cobra and a frog live together.

He who is established in Ahimsa is not an impotent man. He possesses tremendous spiritual strength. He can move the whole world. He has infinite love. He has

ineffable Kshama or forgiveness, and so he forgives the wrong-doers. Ahimsa is a weapon of the strong. It can-not be practised by weaklings.

Ahimsa is supreme love. He who practises Ahim-sa embraces all, loves all.

To begin with, O gentle Mumukshu, stop all physi-cal violence, stop speaking vulgar and harsh words. Then attack the mind directly. There will be inner agitation. You may think of doing violence. Check this Vritti through prayer, worship, meditation, enquiry,

Pranayama, Sattvic food, and study of sacred books. Generate again and again

currents of love by cultivat-ing Atma-Bhava or Narayana-Bhava. You may fail one hundred times. But it does not matter. Stand up again. Gird up the loins. Make fresh resolves. Stick to them te-naciously. March on boldly with steady steps, O yatmic hero. Nil desperandum. Never despair. Be cheerful. Be patient. Be wise. Be adamant. Find out the causes of your failure and remove them one by one.

O Mokshapriya, study the lives of the Apostles of non-violence—Lord Buddha, Lord

Jesus, Mahatma Gandhi and others, again and again. Keep the mental pictures and ideals before your mind's eye. Draw inspiration from them. You will grow steadily in the practice of nonviolence carefully watch your conduct, thought. Speech and deeds daily, when you mix or move with others.

SATYA

Realise Brahman the Truth, through the practice of Truth in thought, word and deed. Truth alone endures. Through Satya you will acquire many virtues.

Mokshapnya said:

O Swamin, Thy instructions on Ahimsa are all nectar to me I never had such beautiful ideas in detail till now You have given me everything in a nutshell. You have filled the Gagar (pot) with Sagar (ocean). Now tell me about Satya or Truthfulness.

Swami Sivananda answered:

O Mokshapnya, Satya is truthfulness in thought word and deed Brahman is Satya or Truth. You will have to realise Brahman the Truth, through the practice of Truth

Truth alone exists for ever in the three periods of time Truth alone endures.

From Truth this world has come out. In Truth it abides and to Truth it returns during Pralaya or dissolution.

Truth, like Ahimsa, is the foundation of Yoga' Vedanta and Bhakti A liar or untruthful man cannot dream of realising the Truth even in crores of births.

If you speak the truth at all times, you will be freed from cares, worries, and anxieties. You will have good sleep. You will enjoy peace.

Satya is the important sentinel at the door of Moksha. If you are established in Satya, you will develop all the divine virtues such as courage, non-violence, purity, self-restraint, tolerance, etc. This sentinel will introduce you to and enable you to make friendship with peace, contentment, humility and serenity, O Mokshapriya.

Fire, air, sun are all followers and practitioners of Truth. Fire burns, wind blows, sun shines and sets at the proper time. They do not deviate even a fraction of an inch from the practice of Truth. The egoistic man alone deviates from Truth on account of egoism, arrogance, does black-marketing, cuts the throats of his brothers, and falls into the dark abyss of ignorance.

O Mokshapriya, live in Truth. Speak the Truth, and become an embodiment of Truth, and a Satya-kama—lover of Truth.

Satyameva jayate na-anritam—Truth alone triumphs; but falsehood never

BRAHMACHARYA

Brahmacharya is the foundation of Yoga, r Bhakti and Vedanta. No spiritual progress is possible Without Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya gives Ojas-Sakti and helps meditation. No evil effect will result from Brahmacharya; only immense benefits accrue. Do not read the books of persons like Freud and be misled.

Mokshapriya said:

O Master, I have a clear understanding of Ahimsa and Satya. I am also practising these virtues. I am gaining immense benefit. Please instruct me on Brahmacharya or purity and continence.

Swami Sivananda answered:

O Mokshapriya, Brahmacharya is a fundamental virtue. It is the foundation of Yoga, Bhakti and Vedanta. It is an important Anga or limb of Yama or self-restraint.

Not even an iota of spiritual progress is possible without Brahmacharya.

Brahmacharya is purity in thought, word and deed. Brahmacharya is celibacy or continence. Through the practice of Brahmacharya one attains Brahman or the Absolute.

There is no half-measure in the spiritual path. Perfect Brahmacharya is necessary for the attainment of Self-realisation. There is no "by and by," "little by little," "gradually," or "tomorrow" for a thirsting aspirant of the first-class type. These expressions delude the aspirant. That tomorrow will never come. Do it now, this very second!

If sex-energy is controlled and sublimated, O Satyapriya, it is transmuted into Ojas-Sakti or spiritual energy which helps the aspirant to enter into deep meditation and Samadhi.

The eight breaks in Brahmacharya should be strictly avoided. This is very important. Go through the books "Practice of Brahmacharya" and "Brahmacharya Drama." Brahmacharya is that kind of right conduct which helps the aspirant to shut out all sexual thoughts and to move towards Brahman or the Eternal and rest peace-fully for ever in Him.

Brahman is purity. You will have to attain Brahman or know Him and become one with Him only through Purity. There is no other way, O Mokshapriya.

No evil effect will result from Brahmacharya. On the contrary, Brahmacharya will sharpen and brighten your intellect, give you immense physical and spiritual strength and power and retentive memory. It will bestow on you illumination, great success, immortal Bliss and eternal Peace. Study the lives of Brahmacharis like Hanuman, Bhishma, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda, etc.

O Mokshapriya, hear not the words of Freud and his followers. Study not their books. You will be misdirected and misguided. It is like a blind man leading a blind man. They are mere surface psychologists and psychoanalysts. They are not seers, Rishis, Yogis or sages who lived in Truth or the Absolute. Give them only their due credit in their limited realm of activity with a finite, frail fragile intellect. They have no knowledge of the Beyond or the Transcendental.

KRIYA YOGA

Kriya Yoga is a purificatory process. By Tapas you attain Tejas. Several kinds of Tapas are ex-rained. Svadhyaya fills the mind with Sattva. svarapranidhana removes egoism, selfishness and vanity.

Mokshapriya said'

O preceptor! May I know what is Kriya Yoga?

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! Kriya Yoga is a purificatory Yoga It paves the way to the purification of the mind. You should have Chitta-Suddhi (purity of mind) first. Then alone will the divine light descend on you.

Tapas (austerity), Svadhyaya (study of sacred scriptures and Japa of Mantras) and Isvarapranidhana constitute Kriya Yoga.

By the practice of Tapas the aspirant becomes brilliant like the blazing fire. He attains Tejas or lustre. The face and eyes become effulgent.

Fasting is Tapas. It cleanses the mind. It destroys sins. There are the Chandrayana and Krichra Vratas. Then there is the Panchagni Tapas. The aspirant sits in the midst of four fires. There is the scorching sun above. He develops power of endurance.

Purity, straightforwardness, continence, worship offered to the gods, to the twice-born, to the teachers and to the wise are the austerities of the body (Sarira Tapas).

Speech that causes no annoyance, truthful and beneficial, is the austerity or Tapas of the speech.

Poise, cheerfulness, silence, self-control, purity of nature are the austerities of the mind.

Walking barefooted, doing Japa standing in water, and sleeping on the ground, are other forms of Tapas.

Svadhyaya or study of sacred scriptures and Japa are Angas of Kriya Yoga. These also purify the mind. Rajas and Tamas are squeezed out of the mind just as the toothpaste is squeezed out of the tube. The mind is filled with Sattva or purity.

Isvarapranidhana is self-surrender to the Lord. The aspirant consecrates his body, mind, Prana, soul, senses, his all, his actions and their fruits at the altar of the Lord. He has no initiative in any action. He is an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Thus he removes his egoism, selfishness and vanity, and purifies his mind.

PRANAYAMA

Control of breath leads to control of Prana. Pranayama removes all diseases and awakens the Kundalini Sakti. Accessories to Pranayama and different kinds of Pranayama are explained. Pranayama is necessary for Bhaktas, Karma Yogins and Vedantins also.

Mokshapriya said

O Swamiji! Now instruct me on Pranayama. Should Bhaktas, Vedantins and Karma Yogins also practise Pranayama?

Swami Sivananda replied:

Pranayama is the regulation or restraint of the breath. Breath is the outer, gross manifestation of Prana. By controlling it, you can control the subtle Prana or energy.

Prana is the highest manifestation of the Lord. Prana is Lord Himself. It is the supreme Tattva or principle It is ever awake, even when the mind and the Senses are resting during sleep.

Through the vibration of Prana alone the mind and the senses are functioning. Prana is Jyeshtha and Sreshtha, i.e., it is the oldest and the best.

On account of the force of Rajas and lamas Prana is moving disharmoniously in the body.

If you practise Pranayama, it will move in a harmonious manner.

Pranayama removes all diseases, even incurable diseases, awakens the Kundalini Sakti, and bestows good health and longevity.

Be regular in the practice of Pranayama. Observe Brahmacharya. Take light food such as milk, butter, sugar-candy. You will have wonderful success in a short time.

There are eight kinds of Pranayama, viz., Ujjayi, Suryabheda, Sitali, Sitkari, Plavini, Bhramari, Bhastrika and Kapalabhati.

Sitali cools the body, purifies the blood, quenches thirst and removes diseases of the skin.

Sitkari is similar to Sitali in its effects.

Bhastrika strengthens the lungs and breaks the Granthis or knots. It cures asthma and consumption.

Suryabheda and Bhastrika produce heat in the body.

Sit on Padmasana or Sukhasana. Draw the air through the left nostril slowly. This is Puraka. Retain the air as long as it is comfortable. Repeat OM mentally. This is Kumbhaka or retention of breath. Slowly exhale through the right nostril. Again draw the air through the right, retain and exhale slowly through the left nostril.

Repeat this six or twelve times according to your strength and capacity.

O Mokshapriya! Go through the book "Science of Pranayama." You will know all the details of the technique of the varieties of Pranayama. Pranayama should be practised by Karma Yogins, Bhaktas and Vedantins also. It steadies the mind, re-moves Rajas and Tamas, and makes the mind fit for concentration.

CONCENTRATION

Steadying the mind through dispassion and practice is Dharana. Yama-Niyama are absolutely necessary. Concrete concentration is essential for a beginner. Hints for success in concentration.

Mokshapriya said:

O Beloved Master! Now teach me all about con-centration in a nutshell.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Concentration is Dharana or fixing the mind steadily on any internal or external object or God or Brahman the Absolute.

The mind is ever wandering. It ever runs towards sensual objects. It ever thinks of sensual-objects. It lumps like a monkey from one object to another object in the twinkling of an eye. This is its habit or nature.

Steadying the mind through practice of Vairagya (dispassion) and Abhyasa (concentration) is Dharana.

Dharana does not come in a day. A week or a month. It should be practised with intense fait, fiery zeal for a very long time.

Without Brahmacharya, dispassion or not-attachment or desirelessness, no concentration is possible. Energy should not leak into the sensuous holes.

The practice or Yama (self-restraint) and Niyama (observances) is also essential for attaining success in concentration.

Be steady in your Asana. Regulate and restrain the breath through the practice of Pranayama. Withdraw the senses from the sensual objects (Pratyahara) Now you will be able to practise concentration.

If you are established in concentration, O Mokshapriya, meditation and Samadhi will come by themselves.

Concentration is of two kinds, viz., concrete (gross) and abstract (subtle). For a neophyte or a beginner concrete concentration on a form is very necessary. Latter on he can take to concentration on an abstract idea such as beauty, purity, peace, bliss, etc.

Concentrate on a black dot on a wall, candle flame, stars, the picture of the Lord, on the Soham breath in the nose, sun, moon, etc.

Regularity in concentration is of paramount importance, O Mokshapriya. Do not miss a day in your practice. Concentrate at a fixed hour for a definite time. Adjust your diet. Take Sattvic and light diet. Be careful in the selection of your companions. Give up evil company. Have faith and devotion to your Guru and Lord.

You will attain sure success in concentration, O lover of Truth, O Sadhana Dhira!

MEDITATION

Meditation is freeing the mind from thoughts of Sense-objects. Mind dwells on God alone. Preparation essential for Dhyana. Saguna Dhyana. before taking up Nirguna Dhyana. Meditation is the fruit of hard struggle for a long time.

Mokshapriya said:

O Blessed Teacher, now instruct me on meditation. My mind is ever wandering despite my effort in the early morning during Brahmamuhurta-4 am.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya, hearken to me with rapt attention and one-pointed mind. Dhyanam nirvishayam manah—Meditation is freeing the mind from thoughts of sense-objects. Mind dwells on God and God alone during meditation.

All of a sudden you cannot jump to meditation and Samadhi. You will fall down and break your legs. Can a student of Third Form understand the "Theory of Relativity," "Advanced Mathematics," etc.?

Purify your heart first through selfless service, recitation of Lord's names, Pranayama, etc, Get yourself established in Sadachara or right conduct.
Have ethical perfection. Then alone you will be established in deep meditation.

Meditation follows concentration and Samadhi follows meditation.

A gross mind, O friend, O Mokshapriya, wants a concrete object for meditation, in the beginning. Meditation on a concrete form such as the form of Lora Krishna with flute in hand, or the form of Lord Jesus or Lord Buddha is very necessary in the beginning. This is Saguna meditation or meditation on the form of the Lord with attributes.
Think of His attributes such as Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence, purity and perfection, etc., when you meditate on His form.
Gradually the mind will be prepared and disciplined to take up the higher Nirakara and Nirguna meditation, formless and attributeless meditation on the Pure Nirguna Brahman.

Deep meditation cannot come in a day or a week or a month. You will have to struggle hard for a long time. Be patient. Be persevering. Be vigilant and diligent. Get rid of all Vasanas, cravings and ambitions Cultivate burning dispassion, burning aspiration or longing for Self-realisation. Gradually you will enter into deep meditation.

Struggle, Mokshapriya, struggle again. Strive hard. Meditate. Meditate. Meditate. You will surely attain success in the end. Mark my word, spiritual hero'

OBSTACLES IN MEDITATION

Obstacles in meditation are enumerated. Measures for getting over them are explained.

Mokshapriya said:

O Lord! Please tell me now what are the Obstacles in meditation. Swami Sivananda replied: O Mokshapriya! Just listen with rapt attention The chief obstacles are Laya (sleep), Vikshepa (tossing of mind), Kashaya (Vasanas
or subtle, hidden desires), Rasasvada (bliss of Savikalpa Samadhi) lack of Brahmacharya, spiritual pride, laziness, disease, company of worldlings, over-eating, over-work. too much mixing with people, and self-assertive, Rajasic nature.

Conquer sleep through Pranayama, Asanas and light diet.

Remove Vikshepa through Pranayama, Japa, Upasana or worship, Trataka, etc.

Destroy Kashaya through dispassion, discrimination, study of books which treat of dispassion, meditation, enquiry, etc.

Rasasvada is the bliss which one gets during the experience of lower Savikalpa Samadhi. This is also an obstacle in meditation, because the Yogi gets false contentment, imagines that he has reached the highest Nirvikalpa state, stops his Sadhana and does not at-tempt to attain the highest state. Rise above Rasasvada; struggle and reach the Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Failure in Brahmacharya fills the mind with impurity. increases the lease of mundane life here and strengthens the sexual Vasana. Therefore, observe unbroken celibacy.

When the aspirant gets some spiritual progress, he develops spiritual pride. He thinks that he is superior to the householders. Maya assumes various forms. De-story this spiritual pride through self-analysis and enquiry.

Laziness is another obstacle. Practise Asanas and Pranayama. Do vigorous selfless service for two hours daily. Run. Draw water from the well. Carry stones. Laziness will disappear.

Observe the laws of health and hygiene. Practise regular excercises, Asanas and Pranayama. Be moderate in eating and drinking, etc. You will enjoy good health.

Shun the company of worldly persons who always talk of sexual matters, money and worldly things.

Do not overwork. This will produce fatigue. You cannot meditate.

Do not mix much with people. Raga-Dvesha (likes and dislikes) will increase. The mind will be perturbed.

Kill the selfasertive, Rajasic nature through humility, enquiry, reflection and meditation. Be vigilant. Fill the mind with Sattva.

O Mokshapriya! Remove the above obstacles one by one. March on boldly in the spiritual path and reach the goal quickly.

EXPERIENCES IN MEDITATION

Experiences of Hatha Yogis and Raja Yogis' during meditation. Visions and sounds of all sorts. Highest experiences of Cosmic Consciousness. Final culmination—Nirvikalpa Samadhi—is a common experience though lower experiences differ in different Sadhakas.

Mokshapriya said:

Guru Maharaj! What will be the experiences in meditation?

Swami Sivananda answered:

Experiences differ in Sadhakas according to the nature of their Sadhana and the Yoga they are practising. The highest experience, Nirvikalpa Samadhi, is the same in all aspirants.

Hatha Yogis and Laya Yogis hear Anahata sounds. They are gross and subtle.

Sometimes they hear the sounds of bells, the sounds of drums, the sound of flute, lute, Vina. Sometimes they hear thunder, the sound of Mridanga, etc.

Some Raja Yogis see brilliant lights during meditation in the Ajna, the space between the two eyebrows. They are like the sun, moon, stars, pinpoints. Some-times they see coloured lights, green, blue, red, etc.

Sometimes they see rivers, mountains, land-scapes, blue sky. They get the vision of Rishis, Munis, etc. They behold their own faces. Advanced Yogis experience Cosmic Conscious-ness. This is a rare experience.

Some float in the air. The subtle, astral body gets detached from the physical body. They have astral journey, and move about in the astral world.

Bhaktas get Darsana of their Ishta Devata or tutelary deity.

Advanced Bhaktas go to Brahma-Loka, Vaikuntha and Kailasa. A Jnana Yogi passes through the stages of dark ness, light, sleep and Moha and
reaches eventually the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

The bliss of Nirvikalpa Samadhi cannot be ex-pressed in words. O Mokshapriya! You will have to experience it yourself, in Samadhi. The bliss of Savikalpa Samadhi is much inferior to that of Nirvikalpa Samadhi

SAMADHI

Samadhi is union with Brahman. It is a state of Eternal Bliss and Eternal Wisdom. It cannot be explained. In Savikalpa Samadhi there is the Triputi. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi even this vanishes.

Mokshapnya said:

Blessed Swamin! I have a clear understanding now of the previous Angas or limbs of Yoga. What is Samadhi, then?

Swami Sivananda answered:

O Mokshapriya! This is the most difficult matter for explanation. Words and language are imperfect to describe this exalted state.

Samadhi is superconscious state or union with Brahman or the Absolute. Mind, intellect and the senses cease functioning. They are absorbed in Mula Prakriti or the Primordial matter.

It is a state of eternal Bliss and eternal Wisdom All dualities vanish in toto here.

You will have to expenence this state yourself through direct intuitive cognition Can you explain the taste of sugar-candy or the conjugal happiness to anybody?

Samadhi is subjective consciousness of Brahman. All visibles merge in the invisible or the Unseen. The individual soul becomes that which it contemplates.

The experience of a Raja Yogi and a Bhakta is dualistic in the beginning. Later on they too experience the non-dual Bliss of Supreme Brahman.

There are two kinds of Samadhi, viz., Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa. In Savikalpa Samadhi there is one idea, there is the Triputi or the triad, knower, knowledge and knowable. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi the triad vanishes. There is not a single idea.

O Mokshapriya, some ignorant aspirants mistake deep sleep and Tamas for the state of Samadhi. They pose for Samadhists by closing their eyes. Samadhi is perfect Self-awareness. It is extremely difficult to enter the state of Samadhi.

Tossing of mind, sleep, cravings, carelessness, in-decision, subtle Vasanas, disease, the happiness of Savikalpa Samadhi, doubt, spiritual pride, institutional egoism, etc., are all obstacles to the attainment of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

O Mokshapriya, struggle hard. Obtain the grace of Guru and lsvara. Live in seclusion. Meditate ceaselessly. You will enjoy the Supreme Bliss of Samadhi.

SLEEP AND SAMADHI

Sleep is an inert state. Samadhi is a state of Awareness. On return from Samadhi, the Yogi is full of Wisdom. Samadhi is sleepless sleep. Other differences between sleep and Samadhi are explained.

Mokshapriya said

O Purushottama, I have now understood the nature and essence of Samadhi. May I know the difference between sleep and Samadhi? Swami Sivananda answered:

Well said, O Mokshapriya; this is indeed a beautiful question I shall give you the reply.

Sleep is a Jada or inert state. But Samadhi is a state of pure awareness or pure consciousness.

When a man returns from sleep he has no experience of the transcendental wisdom of the Self. He is heavy and dull. But when the Yogi or Sage comes down from his state of Samadhi, he is full of supreme transcendental wisdom of Atman. He can clear all your doubts He will inspire and elevate you. He is Brahman Himself.

Samadhi is sleepless sleep. The sage has no consciousness of external world. He is drowned in the ocean of bliss and wisdom.

O Mokshapriya, in sleep there is deep Tamas. The individual soul rests in Karana Sarira or causal body. In Samadhi he rests in Brahman or Satchidananda Svarupa.

If you wake up, deep sleep state disappears. Therefore a changing state is illusory or unreal. But the Samadhi or the superconscious state is the witnessing Consciousness of the three states. It always exists. Therefore it is the only real State.

In sleep the Vasanas and Samskaras are in a very subtle state. But in Samadhi they are burnt in toto by the fire of wisdom.

Burn the egoism and Vasanas, and the five senses, and enjoy the eternal Bliss of this sleepless Sleep, O Mokshapriya.

Chapter VI

OTHER YOGAS

HATHA YOGA

Hatha Yoga is mainly concerned with the physical body and the Pranamaya Kosa. It prepares the aspirant for Raja Yoga. Important Asanas, Mudras, Bandhas and Kriyas enumerated.

Mokshapriya said:

O Bhagavan! Kindly throw some light on Hatha Yoga.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya, Hatha Yoga deals with the practice of Asanas, Pranayamas, Bandhas, and Mudras. It mainly concerns the physical body and the Pranayamas Kosa.

It bestows on one splendid health, removes various sorts of diseases and awakens the Kundalini, the Sakti that is lying dormant in the Muladhara Chakra. It makes the body light, the spine elastic.

Hatha Yoga prepares the aspirant for the practice of Raja Yoga or Dhyana (meditation).

Hatha Yoga helps the aspirant to unite the Prana and Apana and sends the united Prana-Apana along the Sushumna Nadi in the spinal column.

There are 84 Asanas. Among them, the most important ones are Sirshasana, Sarvangasana, Halasana, Matsyasana, Bhujangasana, Salabhasana Dhanurasana, . Paschimottanasana, Mayurasana, matsyendrasana, and Siddhasana, Padmasana Svastikasana and Sukhasana. They are beneficial for the practice of meditation.

Practise the Asanas, etc., in the early morning on an empty stomach. Take a cup of milk when all the practices are over.

The important Bandhas are Mula Bandha, Jalandhara Bandha, Uddiyana Bandha and Maha-Bandha.

The important Mudras are Khechari Mudra, Sambhavi Mudra, Asvini Mudra, Maha-Mudra, Sakti-chalani Mudra, Yoni Mudra or Shanmukhi Mudra.

The Shat-Kriyas are Neti, Dhauti, Bhasti, Nauli, Kapalabhati and Trataka. They remove the phlegm from the body. Neti cleanses the nostrils through a thread. Dhauti cleanses the stomach through a strip of cloth. Bhasti is natural enema. Nauli is churning of the abdomen. Trataka is gazing.

The important Pranayamas are Sukha-Purvaka, Bhastrika, Ujjayi, Sitali and Sitkari.

Regularity in these practices is of paramount important.

O Mokshapriya! Practise a few Asanas and Pranayamas daily to keep up good health. Study the books "Yoga Asanas." "Hatha Yoga" and "Yogic Home Exercises for further enlightenment.

ASANA YOGA

The vital points to be remembered by practitioners. Gradual increase in the period essential. The order of practice Rules relating to food, bath place, dress, etc Breathing during Asana-practice.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin! Kindly instruct me in the practice of the important Asanas.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Oh Dhira! Listen now as I expound to you the principle rules governing this Asana Yoga.

I shall give you the technique of a few most important Asanas that I mentioned in the last lesson.

PADMASANA (The Lotus Pose): Spread on the ground a fourfolded blanket and a cloth over it. Sit in this seat and stretch the legs forward. Take hold of the right foot with the two hands and folding the leg, at the knee, place the foot on the left thigh. Similarly fold the left leg and place it on the right thigh. Keep the body erect end place the hands between the heels. one over the other or on the knees with Chinmudra. Do this from 5 to 30 Minutes, increasing by 5 minutes weekly.

SARVANGASANA (The shoulder-stand pose): Lie on the back quite flat. Slowly raise the leas. Lift the trunk, hips and legs quite vertically. Rest the elbows on the ground firmly and support the back with the two hands. Raise the legs till they

become quite vertical. Press the chin against the chest. Practise this from 1 to 4 minutes, increasing by one minute weekly.

HALASANA (The plough pose): Lie flat on your back on a carpet. Keep the two hands near the thing, palms facing the ground. Without bending the legs, slowly raise them higher up. Keep the hands quite steady on the ground. Raise the hips and lumbar of the back also and bring down the legs to the ground beyond the head. Keep knees quite straight and close together. Press the chin against the chest. Breathe slowly through the nose. Practise this for a period of 20 seconds to begin with, increasing it gradually by 5 seconds a week, to a maximum of 2 minutes.

MATSYASANA (The fish pose): Sit in Padmasana. Then lie flat on the back. The Padmasana should not be raised from the ground. Now lift the trunk and head. Rest the top of the head on the ground by bending the back well. Then catch hold of the toes. Start with 10 seconds and increase the period gradually by 10 seconds a week, till you are able to do this comfortably for 2 minutes.

PASCHIMOTTANASANA (The forward-double Pose): Lie flat on the back over the blanket. Keep the legs and thighs fixed on the ground. Stiffen your body. Slowly raise the head and chest and bend the trunk for-ward till you are able to catch hold of your toes. Exhale completely. Bend slowly by gradual degrees. You can even bury your face between the knees. Remain in the Asana for a few seconds and then slowly raise the head and body and come to the supine position. Now you can Inhale. Do it for 5 seconds to begin with, gradually in-creasing the time by 5 seconds every week, till you are able to do it for a period of four minutes.

BHUJANGASANA (The cobra-pose): Lie down on the blanket on your stomach. Relax all the muscles completely. Place the palms below the corresponding shoulders on the blanket. Raise the head and upper portion of the body slowly, just as the cobra raises its hood. Bend the spine well. Do not raise the body suddenly with a jerk. Raise it little by little so that you will find actually the bending of the vertebrae one by one and the pressure travels downwards from the cervical, dorsal, lumbar and lastly to sacral regions. Let the body from navel downwards touch the ground. This should be practised for 10 seconds every turn up. Begin with three turns; increase it by one turn a week, till you do it six times.

SALABHASANA (The grasshopper-pose): Lie prone on the face. Keep the hands along the body, palms facing above. Rest the chin on the ground by raising the head a little up. Now inhale. Stiffen the whole body and raise the legs above one cubit from the ground. The knees should be kept straight. The sacrum too is raised a little along with the legs. Now the chest and the hands will feel the burden of the legs. Keep the

thighs, legs and toes in a straight line. Retain the pose for 10 seconds. Do it thrice to begin with: increase it by one turn a week, till you do it six times.

DHANURASANA (The bow-pose): Lie down on your face. Relax the muscles. Bend the knees and fold the legs over the thighs. Raise the head and chest. Catch hold of the right ankle with the right hand and left ankle with the left hand firmly. Raise the head, body and knees by tugging the hands and legs so that the whole burden of the body rests on the abdomen. The spine is nicely arched backwards like a bow. Keep the arm and forearm straight and stiff. Stretch the legs well and you can raise the chest. Keep the knees close. Practise this for 5 seconds in the beginning, and increase the period by five seconds a week, till you reach the 30 second mark.

ARDHA-MATSYENDRASANA (The spinal twist pose): Sit with legs stretched out. Bend the right leg at the knee and set the heel against the perineum. Do not allow the heel to move from this space. Bend the left leg at the knee and with the help of the hands arrange the foot to rest on the ground by the external side of the right thigh. Then passing the right hand over the left knee, catch hold of the left foot by the hands firmly. The left knee is placed on the right axilla. In order to have more mechanical advantage for twisting the spine, the left hand is now swung back and the right thigh is caught. Now steadily give a pull and twist the spine and turn towards the right. To help the spine twist evenly all through, neck also is turned towards the left shoulder. Keep the chest erect and forward. Then do it in the opposite direction. Begin with 15 seconds, increase by 15 seconds a week, till you are able to do it for 4 minutes.

MAYURASANA (The peacock-pose): Kneel on the ground over a blanket: Join the two arms together and rest them on the ground, palms facing the ground. Fingers should point to the feet. You can make a slight curve of the fingers. This facilitates balancing. Keep the hands firm. Now you have got steady and firm forearms for supporting the whole body. Bring down the abdomen slowly against the conjoined elbows. Then stretch Your legs and rest the toes on the ground. Inhale and raise the legs together straight on a level with the head, Parallel to the ground. Keep the posture steady for 5 seconds, increasing it by 5 seconds a week, till you stand in this pose for 2 minutes.

SIRSHASANA (The topsy-turvy pose): Spread a soft cushion or a fourfolded blanket on the ground. Sit on Your knees. Make a finger-lock by interweaving the fingers. Place the finger-lock on the ground over the blanket in such a way that the locked hand serves as a vertex and the two elbows as the base to enable the forearms to balance the whole body. Now keep the top of your head on the blanket between the hands and close to the finger-lock. Raise the body and bring the knees to your chest. The toes will be touching the ground. From this position slowly try to remove the toes a little up from the ground. Then slowly raise the legs still higher up till the body

becomes erect. Then bring down the legs very slowly. Stand on this Asana for 15 seconds; increase the duration by 15 seconds weekly till you are able to retain this pose for 5 minutes.

SAVASANA (The relaxation pose): Spread a soft blanket and lie supine. Keep the hands on the ground by the sides. Let the legs be straight. Keep the heels together and toes separated. Close your eyes. Now relax all the muscles of the body. Start the relaxation process from the toes. Practise this for a period of 1 minute to 3 minutes, increasing by 1 minute weekly.

Now I shall tell you an important Mudra, called Yoga Mudra. Sit in Padmasana. Place the palms on the heels. Exhale slowly and bend forward and touch the ground with the forehead. If you retain the pose for a long time, you can breathe in and out as usual; or, come to the former position and inhale. Do it for a minute to begin with and increase the period by one minute a week till you are able to retain the position for five minutes.

O Mokshapriya! Your daily practice would not be complete without Uddiyana Bandha and Nauli Kriya. Hear me expound them to you.

UDDIYANA BANDHA: Empty the lungs by a strong and forcible expiration. Now contract and forcibly draw up the intestines and also the navel towards the back, so that the abdomen rests against the back of the body high up in the thoracic cavity. Uddiyana should be prac-tised at the end of Kumbhaka and beginning of Rechaka. This can be done while sitting or while stand-ing; the latter is easier. Do it once to begin with, in-crease it to seven times by once every week.

NAULI KRIYA: After performing Uddiyana Bandha, isolate the rectus muscle and let it project forward in the middle of the abdomen, by retaining the pressure on the sides of the abdomen. By manipulating the pres-sure, you can isolate the right rectus or the left rectus muscles also. When you are proficient in these, you will be able to roll the rectus muscle clockwise and anti-clockwise. Do this once in the beginning; increase it to seven turns by one turn a week?

I shall now give you some important instructions on the practice. The duration given above shows practice of Asanas for a person of normal health with limited or fixed hours of work. The student shall begin to practise each exercise starting from minimum and reach maximum by weekly increments only. For a practitioner of both physical and spiritual culture, any increase over the maximum given here, even health permitting, is not necessary. Whenever continuity in practice of an Asana Is broken for any reason, the practitioner, when restarting the practice, becomes a beginner in it and should reach the maximum again gradually only. Asanas are .not to be practised

to the extent of exhaustion while the student, after the exercise, should feel hearty and cheerful. To a beginner, the Asanas will be easier in the evening than in the mornings. These, after a month, can be practised with ease both in the morning and evening.

Padmasana is a meditative pose (for Dhyana) In the case of a whole-timed Sadhaka with ample time at. his disposal, he may increase the period of Padmasana to one hour over this maximum by gradual practice. The other poses come under physical culture and they are to be practised in the order described. The practice of Asanas should normally be confined to the timetable in all cases of health-culture, unless otherwise required for cure of diseases. As it is not possible to look to the time of a watch during the practice of a pose, it is suggested to count mentally numerals from 1 to 108 at a moderate speed, preferably with Om added to it, which counting comes to two minutes on an average. The required period may thus be maintained.

As a rule, the practice of Matsyasana should follow Sarvangasana, likewise Savasana after Sirshasana, so also after practising Ardha-Matsyendrasana on one side, it must be done on the other side too. In general after practice of any Asana, Savasana in its relaxed, condition does immense good.

The only restriction in the practice of Asanas is that the practitioner shall not have a loaded stomach it is always safe to practise Asanas five hours after a heavy meal. In the mornings, when the stomach is empty, four ounces of cold water or cooled hot water may be had before practice.

Where possible, a whole bath before practice is recommended; in all other cases, it may follow half an hour after the practice.

There is no holding of the breath in the practice of b Asanas. Asanas by themselves regulate the breathing. Thus, this regulated breathing affords the benefits of respiratory exercise required under Pranayama and prepares the student for practice of Dhyana.

Asanas shall normally be practised over a four-folded blanket spread over a mat measuring 6'x3' in a well-ventilated room or open air.

The traditional use is of a Kaupina or Lungoti (loin cloth) with as little clothing as possible to permit free circulation of blood to several parts of the body and for unobstructed breathing; otherwise any tight clothing at the hip or anywhere is an obstruction to the free flow of blood which is of the highest consideration in Yogic Physical Culture

BENEFITS OF ASANAS

Yogasanas tone up the internal organs. They bestow mental poise. They confer spiritual benefits. Be regular in the practice. The benefit of some important Asanas are given. Asana-Jaya means Perfect mastery over the posture, or sitting on one Asana for three hours at a stretch.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamiji! Please instruct me on the benefits of some important Asanas.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Yogasanas are something more than the physical exercises. They tone the internal organs. They vitalise the thyroid and other endocrine glands.

They bestow mental poise. They confer spiritual benefits. They help you in controlling the emotions. They distribute Prana evenly throughout the body.

If you practise Yogasanas even for ten minutes daily, you will derive immense e benefits. Be regular in i the practice of Asanas. This is important.

Asanas have their own advantages. Practise them and feel yourself.

Sirshasana bestows brain-power and develops the intellect and the memory. It helps the storage of Ojas-Sakti in the brain. It is useful in maintaining Brahmacharya. It cures many diseases.

Sarvangasana makes the spine elastic, and helps digestion very much. It bestows longevity and prevents old age. As the Surya-Mandala in the navel goes up-wards, the nectar in the palate nourishes the body. It is not swallowed up by the fire in the Surya-Mandala. Paschimottana and Mayura Asanas increase the digestive fire and improve digestion. Paschimottasana reduces fat in the belly.

Bhujanga Asana, Salabha Asana and Dhanur Asana remove constipation by increasing the peris-talsis in the bowels.

Thadasana, Trikona Asana and Garuda Asana increase the height of the body.

O Mokshapriya! If you are steady in your meditative pose (Padmasana, Siddhasana, Sukhasana) you will be able to practise Pranayama (control of breath), Dharana Concentration) and Dhyana (meditation) Therefore, obtain first Asana-Jaya in your

meditative pose. You must be able to sit on one Asana gradually for three hours at a stretch.

KUNDALINI YOGA

Kundalini Sakti is the Cosmic Power that underlies all organic and inorganic matter. It can be awakened by various ways. It passes through the various Chakras, and unites with Siva in the Sahasrara. The Yogi enjoys Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Kundalini Yoga bestows various Siddhis.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamiji! Please enlighten me on Kundalini Yoga.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! Kundalini Yoga treats Kundalini Sakti which is lying dormant in the Muludhara Chakra at the base of the spine.

It has 3 ½ coils. It is like a serpent. So it is called the serpentine power. The three coils represent Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The half coil represents the modification of the Prakriti, such as intellect, mind, etc., (the Vikritis).

It is the Cosmic Power that underlies all organic and inorganic matter.

This Sakti can be awakened through the practice of Asanas, Pranayama, Bandhas and Mudras by Hatha Yogis; through concentration and purity by Raja Yogis: through devotion and perfect surrender by Bhaktas; through the pure irresistible, analytical will by the Jnanis; by Japa of Mantra, and by the grace of the Guru.

Thereupon the Sakti is taken up through the Sushumna Nadi. It passes along the various Chakras such as Svadhishthana at the root of the generative organ, Manipura in the navel, Anahata in the heart, Visuddha in the neck, and Ajna in the space between the two eyebrows. Eventually, it joins with Lord Siva in the Sahasrara at the crown of the head.

Now the Yogi enjoys the bliss of Nirvikalpa Sam-adhi. This is the culmination of Kundalini Yoga.

He obtains various powers in each Chakra. Kundalini Yoga bestows various Siddhis.

That Yogic student, who is endowed with purity, dispassion, discrimination, etc., will be really benefited by the awakening of Kundalini.

If the Kundalini is awakened when the heart is impure, when desires lurk in the mind, the student comes across various temptations and gets a hopeless down-fall.

O Mokshapriya! Go through the book "Kundalini Yoga." You will get full theoretical knowledge on this subject.

LAMBIKA YOGA

Practice of Khechari Mudra is Lambika Yoga. The technique of the Mudra is explained. He who practises this Mudra will have neither hunger nor thirst. He can walk in the sky. This Yoga is beset with difficulties.

Mokshapriya said:

O Yogi! Please instruct me on Lambika Yoga. I put this question to several Yogis. They were not able to give me an answer. You are the proper person to instruct me on this Yoga.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya, this is a very difficult Yoga. It has to be learnt under a developed Yogi Guru who has practised this Yoga for a long time and attained full success.

It is kept secret by Yogis. The practice of Khechari Mudra is Lambika Yoga. It confers great Siddhis or powers. It is a great help to control the mind.

He who has attained success in this Mudra, will have neither hunger nor thirst. He can control his Prana quite easily.

Khechari Mudra, Yoni Mudra, or Shanmukhi Mudra, Sambhavi Mudra, Asvini Mudra, Maha-Mudra and Yoga Mudra are the important Mudras. Among these Mudras, Khechari Mudra is the foremost. It is the King of all Mudras.

Mudra means a seal. It puts a seal to the mind and Prana. Mind and Prana come under the control of a Yogi.

Khechari Mudra consists of two important Kriyas, viz., Chhedana and Dohana.

The lower part of front onion of the tongue, the frenum linguae is cut to the extent of a hair's breadth with a sharp knife once in week. Afterwards, powder of turmeric is dusted over it. This is continued for some months.

Afterwards the Yogic student applies butter to the tongue and lengthens it daily. He draws the tongue in such a way that it is similar to the process of milking the udder of a cow. This is Dohana.

When the tongue is sufficiently long (it should touch the tip of the nose), the student folds it, takes it back and closes the posterior portion of the nostrils. Now he sits and meditates. The breath stops completely.

For some the cutting and lengthening of the tongue is not necessary. They are born with a long tongue.

He who has attained perfection in this Mudra, becomes a walker in the sky. Queen Chudala had this Siddhi or power.

He who has purity and other divine virtues, who is free from desires, greed and lust, who is endowed with dispassion, discrimination and strong aspiration or longing for liberation will be benefited by the practice of this Mudra.

This Mudra helps the Yogi to get himself buried underneath the earth.

O Mokshapriya! Take to the easy path of devotion. You need not practise Lambika Yoga which is beset with difficulties.

NADA YOGA

The mind is fixed on Nada or Anahata sounds. It gets Laya or dissolution. The Yogi enters into Samadhi and attains knowledge of the Self. The technique and experiences are explained.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin! Please instruct me on Nada Yoga.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Nada is sound. Brahman willed. There was a Sat-Sankalpa. A vibration or Spandana arose. There was vibration of Om. This is Nada.

The mind is fixed on Nada or Anahata sounds heard in the ear. It gets Laya or dissolution. The Yogi enters into Samadhi and attains knowledge of Self. This is Nada Yoga.

Nada Yoga is also called Laya Yoga.

Kundalini Yoga is also called Laya Yoga.

Mind is naturally attracted by sweet sounds. It is entrapped by the sweet sounds just as a deer is en-trapped by sweet music.
When the mind is attracted by sweet sounds, it for-gets all about the sensual objects.

Sit on Padma, Sukha or Siddha Asana. Practise Shanmukhi Mudra or Yoni Mudra. Close the ears with the thumbs. You will hear ten kinds of Anahata Sounds.
These sounds will make you deaf to all external sound.

Practise Pranayama. You will hear the sounds audibly in a short time.

The mind gets absorbed in the Anahata Sounds. It does not long for sensual objects.

You will attain knowledge of hidden things. You will hear Paravak. You will develop the eye of intuition.
Eventually the mind is absorbed in Brahman or the Absolute.

JAPA YOGA

Japa Yoga is recitation of a Mantra. Countless Saktis reside in a Name. Mental Japa is more power. Ful. Japa while standing in water is highly beneficial. Japa should become habitual. Anushthana and Purascharana are explained.

Mokshapriya said:

O Bhagavan! Please instruct me now on Japa Yoga.

Swami Sivananda answered:

O Mokshapriya! Listen. Japa Yoga is the Yoga of recitation of a Mantra or name of the Lord.
There is a mysterious potency in every name of the Lord. Countless Saktis reside in a name.
A name or Mantra is recited in three ways, viz., verbal or loud utterance (Vaikhari Japa), semi-verbal or humming (Upamsu) and mental (Manasika).

In mental Japa the name or Mantra is recited through the mind only. No one can hear it. This is more powerful. But the beginners will find it difficult to do this Japa. The fruit of mental Japa is ten thousand times more powerful than that of the other two kinds of Japa.

If the mind wanders much, do verbal Japa. This audible Japa will shut out all other external sounds. You will have good concentration. When the mind becomes steady, take to mental Japa.

Lord Krishna says: "Yajnanam Japa-YajnosmI"-- "Among sacrifices, I am Japa."

If you do Japa while standing in the water in a sacred river such as Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Kaveri,
You will realise immense benefit. Samartha Ramdas did this sort of Japa.

Do Japa in Brahmamuhurta (from 4.30 a.m. to 6 am). You will derive great results.

While eating, walking, sitting, recite the Mantra. Let the recitation of Japa become habitual.
Sometimes do Anushthana for 40 days. Live on milk and fruits. Observe Mauna or vow of silence and celibacy. Live in Rishikesh, Nasik or Banaras. Do constant Japa. Finish several Lakhs. You will have God-realisation quickly.

Do Purascharana. Do one lakh (a hundred thou-sand) of Japa for each letter. If there are five letters as in Panchakshara "Om Namah Sivaya," do five lakhs of Japa. This is called Purascharana (Akshara-Laksha Japa). This confers great results. This leads to quick God-realisation. Observe Brahmacharya during this period.
O Mokshapriya! Japa Yoga is the easiest, surest, quickest, safest and cheapest way for attaining God-realisation. Kundalini-awakening, Vedantic Sam-adhi, Asamprajnata Samadhi of Raja Yogis, are all tall talk only. Take the Japa Yoga in right earnest. Plunge in Japa Yoga Sadhana. You will quickly attain God-realsation. The sound vibrations of a Mantra generate. The image of the Lord of that Mantra, and you get the vision or Darsana of the Lord objectively and subjectively.

YOGA OF SYNTHESIS

Man thinks, feels and wills. He must develop his heart, intellect and hand. The three Doshas can be removed by the three Yogas Karma yoga. Bhakti Yoga and

Jnana Yoga. Have one as basic Yoga. Combine other Yogas also. This is Yoga of Synthesis.

Mokshapriya said:

O Gurudev! You very often speak of the Yoga of Synthesis. You lay great stress on this Yoga. You seem to be a great votary of this Yoga. Please enlighten me on this Yoga. I am very anxious to know all about this Yoga.

Swami Sivananda answered:

Yoga of synthesis is suitable for the vast majority of persons. It is a unique Yoga.

Man thinks, feels and wills. He is a triune being. He is a tricycle or a three-wheeled chariot. He has abundant emotion and feelings. He reasons and ratiocinates. He wills. He must develop his heart, intellect and hand. Then alone can he attain perfection. Many aspirants have lop-sided development. They do not possess integral development.

The three wheels must be in perfect order. Then alone will the chariot or tricycle move smoothly. Even so, this body-chariot will move in harmony if you develop the heart, intellect and hand.

Further, there are three Doshas or defects in the mind, viz., Mala (impurity), Vikshepa (tossing of mind) and Avarana (veiling).

Mala should be removed by selfless service (Nishkama Karma Yoga. Vikshepa should be removed by Upasana or worship (Bhakti Yoga). Avarana should be removed by study of Vedantic literature, enquiry, self-analysis and Self-realisation (Jnana Yoga).

Hence everyone should have one Yoga as a basic Yoga. He must combine Nishkama Karma Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Rap Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, etc. This is Yoga of Synthesis.

A little practice of Hatha Yoga (Asanas and Pranayamas) will give you good health.

Raja Yoga will steady your mind. Upasana and Karma Yoga will purify your heart, and prepare you for the practice of Vedanta. Sankirtan will relax your mind and inspire you.

Such a Yogi has all-round development. The Yoga of Synthesis will help you to attain God-realisation quickly. The Upanishads, The Gita and all other scriptures speak of this Yoga. Therefore, O Mokshapriya practises this unique Yoga of Synthesis, and attain Self-realisation quickly.

Chapter VII

JNANA YOGA

YOGA OF WISDOM

Jnana Yoga is the culmination of all other Yogas. Jnana Yoga removes Avidya and reveals the identity of the Jiva with Brahman. Qualifications of an aspirant; the four means. Threefold Jnana Sadhana. Seven Jnana Bhumikas. Four types of Jnanins and their characteristics.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin! Now tell me all about Jnana Yoga. I have got a knowledge of the other Yogas through thy grace.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! Jnana Yoga is the Yoga of Wisdom. It is the culmination of all the other Yogas. It is Kevala Advaita Vedanta.

Jnana Yoga teaches that the individual soul is in essence, identical with the Supreme Soul.

The Jiva appears to be bound and limited through the force of Avidya and its effect. When Avidya is destroyed the individual soul merges in the Supreme Soul.

The aspirant in this path should equip himself with the four means of salvation, viz., Viveka (discriminal tion); Vairagya (dispassion); Shatsampat or sixfold Virtues, viz.. Sama (serenity), Dama (restraint of senses), Titiksha (endurance), Uparati (renunciation of works, or indifference to mundane activity), Sraddha (faith), and samadhana (concentration); and Mumukshutva or burning longing for liberation.

Then he should approach a Brahmasrotriya, Brahmanishtha Guru and hear the Srutis from him, reflect on them and then meditate ceaselessly. He will attain Self-realisation or Atma-Sakshatkara, through this threefold Sadhana.

Subhechha (auspicious desire to cross this Sam-sara), Vicharana (enquiry into the nature of the self), Tanumanasi (thread-like or attenuated state of mind), Sattvapatti Padarthabhavana
(disappearance of ob-jects), and Turiya or the fourth state of superconsciousness are the seven stages of wisdom or Jnana.

(mind filled with purity), Asamsakti (non-at-tachment).

Sattvapatti will destroy to the root all Vasanas in the sixth stage. It is like the Sushupti or deep sleep state. The exalted stage of the seventh is the isolation of Moksha. This state is free from objects and full of bliss.

The four types of Jnanis are Brahmavit (knower of Brahman), who is in the fourth Bhumika, Sattvapatti. Brahmavid-Vara, who is in the fifth stage, Asamsakti; Brahmavid-Variyan, who is in stag stage, Padarthabhavana; and Brahmavid-Varishtha, who is in is the seventh stage, Turiya. The Brahmavid-Varishtha ever absorbed in Brahman. He cannot work. He has to be fed by others.

O Mokshapriya! Purify, concentrate, meditate and attain Self-realisation in this very birth. Tat Tvam Asi Thou art That.

NATURE OF THE ATMAN

A summing up of the nature of the Atman or Brahman. It's essential positive and negative characteristics are enumerated. Realisation of this At-man is Freedom or Final Liberation.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamiji! May I know the nature of the Self or At-man?

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya, the Supreme Self is the Atman or Brahman that abides in the chambers of your heart.
It is the substratum for this world, mind, Prana, body and the senses.

It is Satchidananda, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute. It is indivisible, All-full, Eternal, Self-lu-minous and Self-existent. Weapons cannot cut it, fire cannot burn it, water cannot wet it, air cannot dry it. It is subtler than the sub-tlest, greater than the greatest.
It is the Self or Soul of an ant, dog, outcaste, king, peasant, saint and sinner.

It is beyond the reach of mind, intellect and senses, as it is the Self of all beings.

It is immortal, undecaying, inexhaustible, ever pure, ever free, perfect and independent.

It is truth, wisdom and infinity. It is one without a second. It is the Indweller of all beings.

It is sinless, timeless, partless, deathless, beginningless, endless and motionless.

It is formless, colourless, attributeless, change-less, casteless, bodiless, mindless and nameless.

It is neither short nor long; neither black nor red; neither subtle nor gross.

It is unthinkable, unimaginable, inconceivable, ununderstandable.

It is an embodiment of peace, bliss, wisdom. It is Suprerne Silence (Maha-mauna).

It is not slain, even if this body is slain. It is abso-lute Consciousness (Chaitanya).

It is spotless, taintless, limbless, passionless, cravingless, desireless, egoless.

It gives light to the sun, the moon, the stars, the mind, Prana and the senses.

It is Infinite. It is not conditioned by time, space and causation. It is distinct from the three bodies, five sheaths and three states.

O Mokshapriya! Realise this wonderful Atman and be free forever. Tat tvam asi: Thou art That.

THY REAL NATURE

The Atman is distinct from the body. It is Infinite. It is the Self of all. Formulae for vedantic meditation are given. Giving up of wrong identification with the body is the realisation of the Infinite.

Mokshapriya said:

O Master! Please tell me what is my essential real nature?

Swami Sivananda replied:

O MokshaPriya! Thou art essentially Satchida-nanda Brahman. Thou art not this finite, perishable body, composed of five elements: "Tat tvam as?' Thou art That. Thou art the infinite, all-pervading, self-luminous, eternal, Atman or Soul.

Thou art timeless, spaceless, formless, partless, attributeless, birthless, deathless, decayless. The sun, the moon, the stars and the fire borrow their light from you alone.

The mind, intellect, Prana and the senses shine after you. They also borrow their light and intelligence from you alone.

Indra, Varuna, Agni, Vayu, Yama, Hiranyagarbha are terribly afraid of you. They stand with folded hands to carry out thy behests. Thy breath is the Vedas. Thy one Sankalpa or mere willing is this phenomenal universe. Siddhis and Riddhis (supernormal powers) roll under Thy feet.

The fragrance in the flowers, the effulgence in the sun, the sweetness in sugar, the heat in the fire, the power in electricity, the coolness in the ice, the brilliance in the eyes, the beauty in the landscape, the erudition in scholars—all are thy manifestation alone. Thy one supreme Law, the Law of Cause and Effect is unrelenting and inexorable.

Tat tvam asi—Thou art That.

Roar OM OM OM. Sivoham. Sivoham.

Soham. Soham. Satchidananda Svarupoham.

Come out of this cage of flesh! Rend asunder this little veil of ignorance, this Adhyasa or superimposition, this ignorant identification with the little ego or finite per-ishable body and shine in thy supreme nature, pristine purity, effulgence, splendour, and glory. Wake up from the slumber of ignorance! Thou art like the Prince who was caught up in the company of gipsies, like the young cub of a lion which was caught up in the company of lambs and sheep.

MAYA

Perception of diversity itself is Maya. Do not enquire into the origin of Maya. Strive for its destruction. Maya is Anirvachaniya. It can be crossed through the Grace of God acquired by self-surrender. When Jnana is attained, then one will know all about Maya.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamiji! May I know the origin of Maya?

Swami Sivananda replied:

He who attains Self-realisation, having overcome Maya the illusion, will alone know what Maya is, and how it arises and is destroyed.

This knowledge of the Atman is an occult mystery which is the subject of initiation by a Guru.

Therefore no words can describe the origin of Maya etc.

Till Jnana dawns in you, hold fast to the words of mine that the terrific Maya really is not.

The perception of diversity itself constitutes Maya. At all costs, this Maya should be overcome.

The other bank of the river against which lash the waves of Maya can never be perceived without attaining Brahma-Jnana or knowledge of the Self.

Please do not rack your brain now as to the origin of this Maya but enquire into the means of its destruction. Do not put the cart before the horse.

If it is destroyed, then will you be able to know how it arose. Then will you be able to know whence it arose, what its nature is and how it perishes?

If the dose of medicine called Jnana is administered to you who are suffering from the disease of Ajnana, then you will cross over this Maya. You will not be drowned in the ocean of baneful rebirth.

Lord Krishna says in the Gita, (Chapter XV-3): "Nor here may be acquired knowledge of its form, nor its end, nor its origin, nor its rooting-place; this strongly rooted Asvattha (tree of Maya) can be cut down by the unswerving weapon of non-attachment (Asanga)."

"This divine illusion of Mine, caused by the qualities is hard to pierce; they who come to Me cross over this illusion." (Chapter VII. 14).

O Mokshapriya! Obtain the grace of the Lord through self-surrender. You will be able to cross this Maya and know all about it.

NATURE AND WORKINGS OF MAYA

Maya is the illusory power of the Lord. Maya hides the Real and makes the unreal appear as the Real. Extinction of Maya alone is Moksha. Impure Maya should be slain by pure Maya. Slay this Maya through meditation on the Atman.

Mokshapriya said: I have studied many books on Yoga, Bhakti and Vedanta. I was not able to comrehend the teachings contained therein. But your simple instruction are very lucid, direct, penetrating and forcible. I am drinking again and again thy immortal Upadesha nectar. Now instruct me, O wise sage on the nature and workings of Maya.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Maya is the illusory power of the Lord. The Lord has Maya under His perfect control.

Maya hides the Real and makes the unreal appear as Real.

Maya is Suddha Sattva. It has preponderance of Sattva and a trace of Rajas and Tamas.

Maya can do and undo things. Maya is mysterious. She deludes even the wise persons. Even Narada and b several others were deceived and befooled by Maya. He who has the grace of the Lord can cross Maya.

Extinction of Maya alone is Moksha, O persevering aspirant. Maya will perish without any hindrance through Jnana or Knowledge of Atman.

Slay this Maya through meditation on the Atman. You will realise the ineffable glory and splendour of the Atman.

It is indeed impossible to describe the grandeur and infinite potency of Maya. Maya is but a synonym for birth and death.

The mastery of the terrible Manas or mind, leads to its destruction but not otherwise.

Pure Maya dispels impure Maya. It will destroy the virulent poison of the great Sankalpa. Like a washer-man who removes dirt through dirt, the impure Maya should be slain by the pure Maya. Lust, greed, anger, are impure Maya. Dispassion, discrimination, meditation are pure Maya.

AVIDYA

Avidya is ignorance. Avidya is the cause for bondage; Vidya is the cause for liberation. Destroy the root of Avidya through knowledge of the Atman.

Mokshapriya said:

O Blessed Master! Please tell me what is 'Avidya'?

Swami Sivananda replied: O Mokshapriya! Just listen with attention. Avidya is ignorance or nescience. It is the causal body (Karana Sarira) of the individual soul. It is impure Sattva. It is mixed with Rajas (passion) and Tamas (inertia) The individual soul is swayed by Avidya.

This Avidya is the cause for births and deaths. Mind and body are the effects of Avidya.

It is through destruction of the Avidya that the Brahmic seat of ineffable splendour and glory is attained.

Lust, anger, pride, delusion, jealousy, likes and dislikes, egoism are all modifications of Avidya.

Avidya is the cause for bondage; Vidya is the cause for liberation.

Avidya is deep-rooted. Its branches ramify in various directons. Chop off the branches. Again they will grow. Destroy its root completely through the knowledge of Atman. Then alone will it be totally destroyed.

Avidya is mysterious! Even great intellectual per-sons are deluded by this Avidya.

Bindu-Jagrat, Jagrat, Maha-Jagrat, Jagrat-Sva-pna, Svapna, Svapna-Jagrat and Sushupti are the seven states of Avidya or Ajnana.

The base Avidya has the property of expanding and contracting. O Mokshapriya, annihilate this ignorance through the sword of knowledge of Atman, through the powers of constant association with sages and Jnana-books.

GOOD AND EVIL

Brahman is Supreme Good. Rajas and Tamas are the causes for evil. Evil is a mere appearance. It exists to glorify good. An evil man is a saint of the future. See good in everything.

Mokshapriya said:

O Master, you have taught me several things very lucidly and impressively. Your instructions go direct into my heart. That is the great secret and beauty of your teachings. Please instruct me, O Gurudev, on Good and Evil. I get puzzled sometimes on this matter.

Swami Sivananda replied:

My child, O Mokshapriya, just listen attentively.
Brahman or the Absolute is Supreme Goodness. There is neither good nor evil here. He is Satyam, Sivam, Subham, truthfulness, auspiciousness, etc.

He wanted to create. He willed. A vibration (Spandana) arose. It was Om. Equilibrium was disturbed. The three Gunas, viz., Sattva (purity and good-ness), Rajas (passion) and Tamas (inertia), manifested.

Rajas and Tamas are the causes for evil. All desires and passions are the outcome of Rajas. Tamas urges the man to do all sorts of wrongs. Many people put a question "Why is there evil in this world when Brahman is all Supreme Goodness?"

O Mokshapriya, this is a transcendental question (Atiprasna). There is no answer for this question. It is a great mystery, which the finite, frail intellect cannot comprehend. Do not rack your brain on this point. In reality there is neither world nor evil nor Maya. Brahman alone exists.

Evil is mere appearance. It is not a reality. It is an illusion. Evil exists to glorify good. Good and evil are not two independent things or entities. They are the two sides of the same coin.

An evil man is a saint of the future. Transmute evil into good through Vichara or reflection. Out of evil often cometh good. There is neither absolute Good nor absolute Evil in this phenomenal world. Good and evil are relative terms.

Behold good alone in everything. Develop again and again the good-finding faculty. Destroy the evil-finding quality to its very root.

Rise above good and evil. Transcend the three tunas, the products of illusory Maya and attain Brah-man, the Supreme Goodness, 0 Mokshapriya, through dispassion, discrimination and constant meditation on the Absolute.

PURYASHTAKA BODY

The meaning of Puryashtaka body is explained. Involution of Brahman into Jiva. Puryashtaka body is destroyed by Jnana.

Mokshapriya said:

O Beloved Teacher! May I know what is Puryashtaka body?

Swami Sivananda replied: Puryashtaka body or the eightfold city is com-posed of eight things, viz., Manas
(mind), Ahamkara (egoism), Buddhi (intellect), and the five elements.
Brahman which is without beginning or end and which is the seed of this universe, becomes differentiated. This is Jiva.
It subjects itself to the idea of separateness. Then it becomes Ahamkara (egoism).
This idea of "I", will bring in its train the ideas of time, space and other potencies.
It reflects or does Manana• Then it becomes of intelligence, Manas or mind. Then with the certainty it becomes Buddhi or intellect.
Through the Indriyas or the senses it enjoys the five objects, viz., sound, touch, form, taste and smell.
With the thought of the body, it becomes the body itself.

Through the newly engendered Puryashtaka body dreams upon dreams will pile up and this universe will appear real with the many creations of illusion.
According to one school of thought, the five organs of perception; the five organs of action; the five Pranas; the five Bhutas or elements; Antahkarana, consisting of mind, intellect, subconscious and egoism; Avidya (ignorance), Kama (desire) and Karma (action), constitute the Puryashtaka body.
Kundalini-Sakti rejoices in the name of Puryashtaka. To the Jiva or the individual soul rejoicing in the name of Puryashtaka, Kundalini is like a flower, the seat of the Vasanas. With the dawn of Self-knowledge this Puryashtaka body is completely destroyed.

BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

Identification with the body is bondage. Identification with the Atman is liberation.

Mokshapriya said:

O Adorable Master! Please tell me now what is bondage and what is liberation?

Swami Sivananda replied:

"I am body," "This is mine," "He is my son," "She is my wife"this is bondage, O Mokshapriya.

"I am not this body," "I am all-pervading, immortal Soul," "Nothing exists," "Nothing belongs to me," "All is Brahman or the Absolute" this is liberation, O lover of liberation.

It is bondage when the mind desires anything, when it grieves over anything, when it is elevated when it gains something, when it is depressed when it loses anything.
It is liberation when the mind neither desires nor grieves, when it is not elevated, when it gains some-thing, when it is not depressed when it loses anything.
Identifying the Atman or the Supreme Self with this non-self,this is bondage of man; that is due to ignorance and brings in its train the miseries of birth and death. It is the mistaking of transitory things as real that constitutes bondage.

Identify yourself with the all-pervading, immortal Atman—this is emancipation which bestows eternal bliss, supreme peace and Immortality.
If the mind is attached to objects of this world, this is bondage. If it is unattached, this is liberation.
Where there are likes and dislikes, there is bond-age; age; where there are neither likes nor dislikes, there s liberation. Where there is the lithe self-arrogating "I," there is bondage; where there is no "I," there is liberation. Know this to be the Truth, O Mokshapnya.

BLISS, IMMORTALITY, FREEDOM

The Atman is an embodiment of bliss. Search for permanent bliss wit, hi your Consciousness, Atman. The Atman is immortal Supreme Independence.

Mokshapriya said:

O adorable Guru! Where can get eternal bliss, immortality, wisdom and freedom?

Swami Sivananda replied:

Every man or woman in this world wants everlasting happiness. This is his or her innate or inherent feeling. This indicates that his own soul is an embodiment of bliss.

He builds bungalows; he marries and begets children; he accumulates wealth; he goes to America to get diplomas in order to become a very big officer; he moves in big cars. But ultimately he feels miserable, dissatified, discontent and restless. He always feels a want. He has no peace of mind.

He searches for his happiness in external, perish-able objects. He moves in the wrong direction. He wants to get water in the mirage, silver in the mother-of-pearl, and so he is disappointed.

Search for the undying permanent bliss within your own innermost Atman by purifying and steadying the mind and fixing it on this immortal Soul within. You will surely attain this.

Nobody wants to die. Everybody wants immortality. This is his innate feeling. This gives the clue that there is something inside his body that is immortal. That something is his own Soul or the Atman.

But through delusion, stupefaction and illusion, he tries to make his body immortal. He takes tonics and he gets his body shampooed daily. He gets disappointed His body decays. He suffers from diseases and dies eventually. Immortality can only be attained by realising the immortal Atman.

Everybody wants in the world a deep and full knowledge of everything. He gets D. Litt., and Ph.D., titles. He joins Research Institutes. But he does not attain what he wanted. He is still ignorant, restless and dissatisfied. He always wants more knowledge. This want can only be removed if he attains the Supreme Knowledge of Brahman or the Eternal.

Then again man wants freedom and independence. In his heart of hearts he does not want to serve anybody or remain under the control of anybody in this world. He wants full. freedom and independence He wants to be the Lord of everybody. This gives the clue that his own Atman is the true Lord of lords, ever free, ever independent. Realise this ever-free inner Atman. Then alone can you be free and independent.

Hey Saumya! O Mokshapriya! Search within Seek within, eternal bliss, immortality, supreme knowledge and freedom by realising this wonderful. mysterious Atman that abides in the chambers of your heart and roam about freely and happily. This Atman is Paripurna, all-full and self-contained. All desires are gratified here. You will get Nitya-Tripti, eternal satisfaction.

VIVARTA-VADA

Apparent transformation is Vivaria. World is an illusion. Brahman is the only Reality.

Mokshapriya said:

O Master! Explain to me the Vivarta-Vada of Vedanta.

Swami Sivananda answered:

O Mokshapriya! The cause is transformed into effect without the former losing its own character.
This is Vivarta-Vada. There is only an apparent transformation.

According to the Vedantin, this universe is the Vivarta of Brahman. Somehow Brahman appears as the visible universe without being affected even a bit.
Maya or ignorance is unreal. Therefore, the visible phenomenal world, which is its effect, is also unreal.
The entire world is a mere illusion. It is an unreal and illusory appearance. Brahman is the only real entity.
As the snake is a Vivarta of the rope, so is the world a Vivarta of Brahman.

Bring the light; the snake disappears and the rope alone exists.

Attain knowledge of the Self; the illusion of universe vanishes; Brahman alone exists.

VICHARA

The meaning of Vichara is explained. The out-lines of Vichara are given. Vichara-Sakti differentiates men from animals. Vichara leads to Brahma-Jnana.
Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin! What is Vichara? The Vedantins say every moment, "Do Vichara."

Swami Sivananda replied:

Vichara, Suvichara. Brahma-Vichara are synonymous terms. Vichara means "Enquiry." It is enquiry into the nature of Brahman or the Atman. It is enquiry of "Who am I?"

How was this universe born? Who is its Creator? What is its material cause? What is bondage? What is freedom? What is Vidya? What is the relation between the Jiva or the individual Soul and the Supreme Soul? What is the relation between man and the universe? These constitute Vichara or enquiry.

Vichara is the mastering of the good qualities of the wise and of Atmic contemplation with the rise of spiritual desire in one.

The ceaseless Atma-Vichara (Atmic enquiry) constitutes the second stage, or the second Jnana Bhumika.

Vichara is one of the four sentinels who guard the door of Moksha or Liberation. If you make friendship with him, he will introduce you to the other three, viz., Satsanga (company of the wise), Santi (peace) and Santosha (contentment).

The practice of Vichara demands a pure, sharp, Subtle and one-pointed intellect.

It is this Vichara-Sakti that differentiates man from the animals.

Vichara leads to the attainment of Brahma-Jnana Self-realisation. Vichara generates the Brahmakara Vritti that destroys ignorance or Avidya.

O Mokshapriya! Study Vedantic books such as the Upanishads, Viveka-Chudamani, Yoga-Vasistha, Panchadasi. Cultivate this Vichara-Sakti and attain knowledge of the Self.

DISCRIMINATION

A firm conviction that Brahman is real and all else is unreal is Viveka. When there is real discination, dispassion arises. Learn to discriminate and become wise. You will be ever blissful.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin, instruct me on discrimination.

O Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya, a firm conviction of the mind to the effect that Brahman or the Absolute alone is Real and world unreal, is designated as the discrimination (Viveka) between the real and the unreal.

Discrimination dawns on a man on account of the grace of the Lord obtained through the performance of virtuous actions in several births. When there is real, lasting discrimination, dis-passion or desirelessness comes by itself.

Discrimination is a strong sword, O Mokshapriya, to destroy worldly desires, ambitions and various worldly attachments. It is wisdom-eye-opener. It is a "secondary" intuitive eye of wisdom. It is a spiritual faculty that annihilates the clinging of the mind to earthly: objects.

Whenever the senses and the mind hiss and raise their hoods to get their objects, raise the rod of Viveka. They will become silent. Discrimination of the real means the determination that the nature of the Self or the Atman is eternal while all that is perceptible is unreal.

This body, this mind, and this world, O aspirant, have no real being. The all-pervading, immortal Atman or Brahman alone really exists. Learn to discriminate, O Mokshapriya, and become wise. You will be ever bliss-ful.

VAIRAGYA

Vairagya is dispassion, desirelessness, or non-attachment, Vairagya liberates man from bond-age. Difference between Karana-Vairagya and Vairagya born of Viveka. Look into the defects of sensual life, wealth, desire; live in the company of saints. Vairagya is the foremost virtue. Mokshapriya said:

O Preceptor! Please instruct me on Vairagya.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! Vairagya is dispassion, desire-lessness, or non-attachment.

Vairagya is an important virtue or Sadhana for attaining Samadhi or God-realisation. It is the opposite of Raga or attachment. Raga binds a man to Samsara; Vairagya liberates a man from bondage.

Look into the defects of sansual life, Viz, birth, death and its concomitant evils; old age, decay, dis-eases, fear, anxiety, worry, pain, sorrow, etc. Vairagya will dawn gradually in the mind.

Vairagya born of Viveka or discrimination between the real and the unreal will help you in your Sadhana and will be permanent.

Karana-Vairagya born of disappointment, loss, death of relatives will leave you at any moment. It will be waiting for chances to seize again the objects that were once renounced. It will evaporate quickly like ether, chloroform or ammonia.

Wealth is the source for misery and unhappiness. It is very ephemeral in its nature.

The fire of desires burns a man. This body is the abode of diseases and impurities. Youth is evanescent like lightning. Everything in this world is impermanent.

Vairagya is the supreme inexhaustible wealth. The whole world is a straw for a dispassionate man.

Live in seclusion in the company of saints and sages. Study again and again "Vairagya Mala," "How to Get Vairagya," and "Necessity for Sannyasa." You will develop gradually Vairagya.

Without Vairagya, not even an iota of spiritual progress is possible. If there is no Vairagya, energy will leak out from various holes of this body. There will be no ascent in the ladder of Yoga, despite your Sadhana.

O Mokshapriya! Vairagya is the foremost of all divine virtues. It is the only Sadhana to take you up to the peak of eternal wisdom or Nirvikalpa-Samadhi. Cultivate this to a maximum degree. Be ever vigilant. Do not; slacken yourself, falsely thinking that you have attained Jivanmukti. You will have a hopeless downfall. You will not be able to rise up again. Beware. Beware. Beware. Shun the company of worldlings.

WHO AM I?

Who am 'I'? This question is answered. The real 'I' is not the body nor the senses, not the Prana nor the mind, not the intellect nor Ahamkara, not the Jiva nor Karana-Sarira. The real 'I' is the Inner-most Atman. Such enquiry confers on one Atma-Jnana.

Mokshapriya said:

O Adorable Guru! Please explain to me the Who am I?" philosophy.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! How can we apply the term "I" to the body visible to us? The body is inert and ignorant. It is a mixture of five elements. It is a mass of Tamas. It is perishable (Parichhinna or finite). Therefore, the term "I" cannot be applicable to it.

Again, the term "I" cannot be applied to the ten organs which vitalise the body. The ten inert and separate sense-organs (Indriyas) are moved by the flitting mind. The organs are the products of the Gunas. They are finite, and perishable.

The term "I" cannot be applied to the Prana also. Prana is inert. It is a product of Rajas. It has a beginning and an end. It cannot welcome a friend during sleep.

The term "I" cannot be applied to the mind which, through its power of Sankalpa, agitates the organs. Even the mind is inert. It is goaded on to action by the certainty of intellect. It has a beginning and an end. It is a product of Sattva-Guna.

The intellect is not "I," because it is in turn galvanised by Ahamkara or egoism. The intellect also is a product of Sattva-Guna. A product is perishable.

Ahamkara is not the real "I." It is the inert seat of the Jiva or the individual soul. Ahamkara is a product of the intellect. It is also perishable.

The "I" cannot be applied to the Jiva which moves Ahamkara. It is of the nature of action and Prana. It rests in the heart. It is only a reflection. Hence the Jiva is not "I".

The causal body or Karana-Sarira is not "I." It is composed of Samskaras and Vasanas. It is inert and perishable. It is finite.

The real, infinite "I" is your own Innermost Atman or Soul.

It is the support or substratum for the physical body, senses, mind, intellect, Prana, the causal body and the Jiva.

This Atman is Brahman or the Absolute. It is Sat-Chit-Ananda. It is all-pervading, self-luminous, indivisible, all-full, eternal, self-contained, ever-pure, ever-full. It is non-attached. It is non-doer, non-enjoyer. It is the silent Witness.

O Mokshapriya! Kill this little self-arrogating "I" and realise the Bhuma or the Infinite.

This is enquiry "Who am I?" which confers on one the true Atma-Jnana.

PRANAVA OR 'OM'

OM is the symbol of Brahman. It is the word of power. The various meanings of OM are given. Meditate on OM. You will attain Self-realisation.

Mokshapriya said:

O Master! Now teach me on Pranava or OM.

Swami Sivananda replied:

OM or Pranava is the supreme symbol of Brahman or the Absolute.

The whole world has come out of OM. All sounds and languages have come out of OM.

OM is Sabda Brahman. It is the word of power. All Mantras have OM in the beginning, such as OM Namo Narayanaya, OM Namah Sivaya.

In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God; the Word Itself was God. This is OM.

Study the Mandukya Upanishad and the Prasna Upanishad. You will know all about OM.

OM is the bow; the arrow is the individual soul, Brahman is the target. Meditate continuously on Brahman. Just as the arrow becomes one with the target, so also the individual soul will become one with Brahman.

This body is the lower part of the Arani (sacrificial wood for generating fire). OM is part the upper f the body. By the churning of meditation realise the Self or the Atman.

OM is the prop for everything. OM is the supreme refuge or support for everything.

OM is the best thing in this world. OM is both Saguna and Nirguna. For Vedantins, OM is Nirguna.

OM consists of A, U, M and Ardhamatra: Nada, Bindu, Kala and Sakti.

As soon as you sit for meditation, chant a long OM, six times. You will be elevated and inspired. Then start your meditation.

O Mokshapriya! Do Japa of OM, understanding and feeling its significance. OM is Sat-Chit-Ananda. OM is Infinite. OM is Immortality. Sing OM. Meditate on OM. You will attain Self-realisation.

ASPARSA-YOGA

Asparsa-Yoga is the Yoga of non-attachment. Asparsa-Yoga culminates in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. There is no contact with objects. The mind is dis-solved in Brahman.

Mokshapriya said:

O blessed Bhagavan! Yesterday I attended the Satsanga of Swami Sankarananda Bharati. When I was returning, Swami Nityamuktananda asked me, "Do you know what Asparsa-Yoga is?" I was not able to give him an answer. I have never heard of such Yoga. Please enlighten me on this Yoga.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Sparsa means touch. Asparsa is non-touch or non-contact.

The senses and the mind are in contact with the objects. You get perception and knowledge of objects through the avenue of senses. Asparsa-Yoga disconnects the mind from the senses and their objects.

Asparsa-Yoga is that Yoga which culminates in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The individual soul is in contact with the supreme Brahman or the Highest Self.

There is no real touch or contact as in the perception of objects. Here the mind gets dissolved in Brahman. Hence it is called Asparsa-Yoga.

There is a play of words in this world. It is a Mayaic jugglery. Asparsa-Yoga, Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Nirbija Samadhi, all mean the same thing.

In Nirvikalpa Samadhi there is no thought or idea. In Nirbija Samadhi the seeds or Samskaras are burnt up. In Asparsa-Yoga the mind melts in Brahman, just as camphor melts in fire.

There is no contact of ether with any object, though it is the substratum for the elements and objects. Even so there is no contact of Brahman with the mind of the aspirant.

Just as a lump of sugar dissolves in water, so also the mind of a Yogi or sage dissolves in Brahman.

O Mokshapriya! Melt your mind also in the subtle Brahman and realise the fruit of AsparsaYoga, viz., immortal Bliss.

Mokshapriya said:

O Bhagavan, may I know the essence of Self-realisation?

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya, Self-realisation is Atma-sakshatkara or direct intuitive perception of one's own innermost soul.

This is the goal of life. Man is born to attain this. The fruit of Nirvikalpa Samadhi or Asamprajnata Samadhi is Self-realisation.

All dualities or pluralities, all distinctions and all differences vanish in toto. The aspirant gets established in his own Satchidananda Svarupa or Absolute Consciousness, which is the only Reality. He beholds the One Self or the homogeneous Essence of Wisdom-Bliss alone everywhere. All names and forms dis-appear.

He is absolutely freed from sorrow, pain, delusion, fear, egoism, lust, anger, pride and all modifications of mind or ignorance.

He gets transcendental wisdom. All ignorance, desires and actions are burnt in toto.

He is freed from birth and death and attains immortal Bliss.

Self-realisation, O Mokshapriya, is not a process. It is not a becoming. It is pure being. It is not a new thing to be attained. The Jiva only knows that he is all-pervading, Immortal Soul. To know That is to become That.

The curtain or the veil of ignorance lifts. The mind melts in silence in the Absolute. The senses are with-drawn into the mind. The Self-effulgent Soul shines in its own pristine glory. It rests in its own glory. Just as the river joins the ocean and becomes one with the ocean, just as camphor melts in the fire and becomes one with the fire, so also the individual soul becomes one with the Supreme Soul or the ocean of Pure Consciousness.

This Ocean of Consciousness is without a shore and surface. It is an Ocean of Supreme, Undecaying Bliss.

Realise this mysterious, wonderful, all-blissful Soul and roam about happily, O Mokshapriya.

MOKSHA OR FINAL BLESSEDNESS

Moksha is freedom from misery and attainment of bliss. Moksha is freedom from birth and death. The nature of Moksha is described. Mokshapriya said:

O Compassionate Swamin, teach me of Moksha.

Swami Sivananda answered:

O Mokshapriya! Well asked. You are indeed a thirsting aspirant. I shall give you the answer.

Moksha is Sarva-duhkha-nivritti or freedom from all sorts of pains, and Paramananda-prapti or the attainment of Supreme Bliss, O Seeker of the Real!

Moksha is freedom from birth and death, O beloved one. Moksha is freedom from the trammels of matter and the thraldom of mind.

O Joy of the Rishis, O Light-brighter-Light, Moksha is that Supreme State of blessedness wherein the individual soul rests in the Supreme Soul. The mind, intellect and the senses cease to function now. The individual soul enters into the Infinite or the Absolute.

It is Moksha or release or emancipation or salvation, O rare hope in the wilderness, when the mind neither desires nor grieves, is neither angry nor joyful, neither accepts nor rejects anything.

O dear Atmapriya, Moksha is a most rare thing. Spiritual erudition or ceremonials cannot give liberation. Moksha should be earnestly sought through a Teacher or Brahmanishtha Guru.

O Mokshapriya, he who has the four means of salvation (Sadhana-Chatushtaya), viz., discrimination between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the impermanent (Viveka); dispassion (Vairagya); the six-fold virtues (Shat-Sampat), viz., serenity (Sama), self-restraint (Dama), endurance (Titiksha), satiation (Uparati), faith

(Sraddha), and balance of mind (Samadhana): and aspiration or longing for liberation (Mumukshutva), will attain Moksha.

He who has attained Moksha, O heir to Immortality, abides in the bliss of Self-realisation. He has no consciousness of duality, good or evil, hope or fear, inside or outside. distance or proximity.

IMMORTALITY

Where there is no duality, there is Immortality. When the three knots are cut, one attains Immortality. Help of a Self-realised Guru is necessary for attaining Immortality. If thy aim is Immortality, shun sense-objects.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamin, speak to me now on Immortality.

Swami Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapnya, where there is nothing to be seen or heard, or thought of, where there is no duality, there is Immortality or Amritam or Bhuma, the Absolute or the Infinite.

Immortality is the very nature of the Atman or this soul that abides in the chambers of your heart.

When the three knots of the heart, viz., Avidya (ignorance or nescience), Kama (desire) and Karma (action) are rent asunder, one attains Immortality, here.

When there is no identification with the body, O Seeker of Truth, when likes and dislikes are destroyed, when the egoism is pulverised, one attains Immortality.

The road to Immortality is steep, precipitous and thorny. It is full of pitfalls and snares. The help or grace of a realised sage is necessary at every step.

When one attains knowledge of Truth or Brahman, he becomes Immortal.

He who has renunciation, endurance, discrimination, dispassion, devotion to Guru and God, energy and burning aspiration, will surely reach the peak of Immortality.

O Friend! O Mokshapriya! If thy aim in life is Immortality, shun sense-objects as poison and pursue as nectar, serenity, contentment, mercy, equanimity and purity.

BLISS-ABSOLUTE

Ananda is the Bliss of the Atman. The difference between sensual pleasure and Ananda of the Atman is described. Sat-Chit-Aananda is the nature of Brahman. There is no greater happiness than Ananda of the Atman.

Mokshapriya said:

O Venerable Master, instruct me on Ananda.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Ananda is self-delight, O Child of Immortality. Ananda is eternal Bliss of the Atman or the Absolute (Brahman).

O Mokshapriya, it is not an attribute of the Immortal Soul, the Substratum for everything. It is the essence of the Soul. It is the Supreme Essence of all essences, "Rasanam Rasatamah."

When you enjoy an external object, O gentle devotee, you get pleasure; but it is not the case with the bliss of the Soul. There is neither enjoyer, nor enjoyed in the Bliss or Ananda or Self-realisation. Where there is no duality, who is to enjoy whom?

O blessed Spark of Adhyatmic Fire; know that sensual pleasure is mixed with pain, sorrow, tribulation, cares, worry and anxiety. It is fleeting like the lightning.

But, look at the great contrast, O Mokshapriya. Ananda is eternal, undecaying, undiminishing, unmixed with pain or grief. It is unadulterated, supreme felicity and joy.

Ananda is Bliss-Absolute, O sweet Grace of the Lord. There is neither mind nor senses here. There is neither attraction, nor repulsion here. There is no ego here

O Son of Amrita, wherever there is Ananda, there is the pure, Absolute-Consciousness; there is Existence-Absolute. Satchidananda is the Svarupa or nature of Brahman, the Infinite. Ananda is Bhuma, the Infinite, the Unconditioned. Sat, Chit and Ananda are one.

Know well, O Dhira, sensual pleasure is dependent on objects. But Ananda or the Bliss of the Soul is In-dependent. It is the inherent or the innate nature of Brahman or the Atman.

O brave Mariner in the Tempest of life! That is the reason why sages, Yogis and ascetics, Sannyasins and Rishis constantly struggle to realise this Supreme Bliss, the Ananda of the Atman (Atma-Sukha).

There is no greater happiness, O Light of the hap-less, than the Ananda of the Atman or the Inner Soul. Atmic bliss is Niratisaya-Ananda. O Mokshapriya, the sum total of the pleasures of the fourteen worlds is not even a drop when compared to the ocean of the Bliss of Brahman, the Atman.

Therefore, Hey Saumya, O dear Immortal Child, wake up! Strive. Strive. Strive to realise this Supreme Bliss of the Soul or the Atman.

WHAT IS JIVANMUKTI?

The Jivanmukti state is not inert. It is a state of perfect awareness. A Jivanmukta is free from ego-ism, mind and matter. He beholds only Brahman everywhere.

Mokshapriya said:

O Swamiji! Tell me what is Jivanmukti? Is it simply a Jada state or a condition of inert a block of stone? What is the use of Jivanmukti? Swami Sivananda answered:

My child, Mokshapriya, you have an erroneous notion about Jivanmukti.

Jivanmukti is a very exalted state of eternal bliss. Words cannot adequately describe this state. You will have to realise this state of supreme knowledge and highest illumination yourself.

Certainly, it is not a state of inertia. It is a state of perfect awareness. The individual soul has become now one with the Absolute.

It has no individuality. Its egoism, mind and senses have been burnt in the fire of wisdom.

It is freed from the trammels of mind and matter. It is absolutely free. perfect, independent. It is absolutely free from hatred, lust, cares, worries and anxieties. Everybody will surely like this state of beatitude or final emancipation. It is the final goal of life. It is the end of all human aspirations.

In the state of Jivanmukti, O Jijnasu, there is no consciousness of the body and the world. There is consciousness of the Absolute.

The sage beholds only Brahman everywhere. All dualities, differences have vanished for him in toto.

The mind can get entire satisfaction and rest very peacefully only if this state is attained.

There is fullness in this state. All desires are burnt. It is a state of plenum or absolute satisfaction. There is no gain greater than this, no bliss greater than this, no wisdom greater than this.

It is the be-all and end-all of existence, O Mokshapriya. Attain this state through purity, discrimination, enquiry and ceaseless meditation on the inner-most Atman, and roam about happily.

WHO IS A JIVANMUKTA?

The characteristics of a Jivanmukta are explained. He radiates joy and peace everywhere. A Jivanmukta may be absorbed in Samadhi or he may work.

Mokshapriya said:

O Teacher Universal, please tell me "Who is a Jivanmukta?"

Swami Sivananda replied:

A Jivanmukta is a liberated sage. He is emancipated while living.

He has cut off all bonds. He has destroyed his mind. He is in a state of mindlessness.

He is absolutely free. He has identified himself with Brahman or the Absolute Consciousness. He has no identification with the body.

He is free from egoism, lust, anger, greed, selfish-ness, pride, likes, dislikes, exhilaration and depression Harsha-soka.

He is balanced in pleasure and pain, censure and praise, honour and dishonour, respect and disrespect. He has equal vision.

He has supreme knowledge of Brahman. He is a Brahman-Jnani, He is a Brdahmavit or knower of Brahman. He can clear all your doubts. You will feel extreme elevation and inspiration in his presence. He radiates joy and peace everywhere.

He may be absorbed in Samadhi or he may work like an ordinary man of the world, Internally he has the Bhava or mental attitude "I am a witness (Sakshi), i am non-doer (Akarta), I am non-enjoyer (Abhokta)," be-cause he has no egoism or individuality. So he is not bound by his Karmas.

He is a Gunatita. He is beyond the reach of the three Gunas or qualities, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

He has Trikala-Jnana or knowledge of the three periods of time. He has omniscience.

He enjoys the sense-objects offered by others like one sleeping or like a child. He beholds this world like one seen in dreams.

O Mokshapriya! Hear the Srutis, reflect, meditate and become a Jivanmukta.

ESSENCE OF THE UPANISHADS

Choice Mantras and Mahavakyas from the Upanishads, and the gist of the most important pas-sages from the Upanishads are given.

Mokshapriya said:

O Beloved Master! There are very many Upa-nishads. I have not much time to go through them. I do not know also much Sanskrit. I do not possess a sharp, bright intellect. Kindly teach me the essence of all the Upanishads. I will daily meditate on this essence.

Swami Sivananda replied:

Well asked, O Mokshapriya! Here is the essence of all the Upanishads. Hear, reflect and meditate ceaselessly. You will attain surely Self-realisation.

The four Mahavakyas or the great sentences of the Upanishads are (1) Prajnanam brahma Absolute Consciousness is Brahman); (2) Aham brahma asmi (I am Brahman); (3) Tat tvam asi (That Thou art), and (4)Ayam atma brahma (This Atman is Brahman).

Satyam jnanam anantam brahma:

Brahman is Truth, Wisdom and Infinity.

Ekam eva advitiyam brahma:

This Brahman is one without a second. Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma: Na iha nana anti kinchana: All, indeed, is Brahman; there
is no such thing as diversity.

Om is the bow. The Atman is the arrow. Brahman is the target. Meditate constantly on Brahman. Just as the arrow becomes one with the target, you will become one with Brahman.

Brahman created the senses with outgoing ten-dencies. So man beholds the external world but not the internal Atman. But some spiritual heroes who wish to attain immortality realise this Atman by withdrawing the senses. On realising Brahman, all the knots of the heart, viz., Avidya (ignorance), Kama (desire) Karma (action) will be rent asunder; all doubts will be dispelled; all Karmas will be destroyed.

Just as the running rivers join the ocean, giving up their names and forms, so also the Jivanmukta or the liberated sage joins the Brahman, abandoning all names and forms. This Atman is attained by Truth, austerity, wisdom and the practice of celibacy. The self-controlled ascetic who is free from defects beholds the self-effulgent, pure Atman that dwells in the chamber of the heart.

O Mokshapriya! Meditate on the above truth of the Upanishads and attain the summum bonum of existence. Tat tvam asi: Thou art That. OM, OM, OM.

ESSENCE OF THE YOGA-VASISHTHA

The essence of the Yoga-Vasishtha is given in a nutshell. Brahman is the only reality. Mind and the universe are unreal. Mind alone is the universe. Action of the mind alone is Karma. Renunciation of Ahamkara leads to Atma-Jnana. The various methods for obtaining Atma-Jnana are set forth.

Mokshapriya said:

O Bhagavan! May I know the essence of the Yoga-Vasishtha, the monumental book on Vedanta?

Swami Sivananda replied:

The essence of the teachings of the Yoga-Vasishtha is the following:

The world and the ego are unreal. Brahman, the Absolute, is the only Reality.

The neophyte on the path of Vedanta or Jnana Yoga should possess the fourfold qualification, viz., Viveka (discrimination between the real and the unreal), Vairagya (dispassion), Shatsampat (sixfold virtues) and Mumukshutva (intense longing for emancipation).

Cultivate Santi (peace), Santosha (contentment) and pure Vasanas (habits). Practise Brahma-Vichara (enquiry into the nature of Reality. Take recourse to satsanga association with the wise. you will soon attain self-realisation.

Brahman or the Absolute manifests Itself as Jiva or the individual soul, Isvara or the Lord and Jagat or the universe. The light of Brahman alone is Jiva and the others.
This universe is nothing but a diversity of Maya. The mind alone is the universe.

The world is nothing but the mind manifesting itself as such, through the potency of Brahman.
The body with its organs, etc., is no other than mind manifest in a gross form.

The mind manifests itself as the external world in the shape of pains or pleasures. The mind, objectively, is this universe.
Those who are without Atmic enquiry will see as real this world which is nothing but a form of Sankalpa. Actions of the mind alone are truly termed Karmas. True liberation results from the disenthralment of the mind.

Those who have freed themselves from the fluctuations of their mind are endowed with the supreme Nishtha (meditation).
If the impurities of the mind are removed, it will be-come steady and calm. Then the Samsaric, delusion with its births and deaths, will be destroyed
The play of the mind constitutes this universe.

The conception of the reality of the world will in-crease with the contemplation of the non-Atman or the world of objects.
The renunciation of Ahamkara or egoism leads to the attainment o Atma-Jnana or Self-knowledge.
Sankalpa alone manifests itself as Jiva, lsvara and the universe.

This universe as universe ever is not. There is no world in the three periods of time (Note:This is known as Ajati-Vada or the theory of the non-evolution of the universe).

The spiritual experiences arise after many births only, and that, too, with great difficulty.

Concentration of the mind on the Self, the One Seer, leads one to cognise his own Reality.

Through the performance. in this world, of Nish-kama-Karma, or unselfish work, even sensual pleasure is transmuted into spiritual or Brahmic Bliss.

Through the grace of Isvara, also, the higher spiri-tual state will be attained.

The Atman can be realised by controlling Maya. All ideas of the world will vanish, if Maya is controlled.

The supreme, immortal Bliss of the Atman can be attained through Samadhi, consequent upon Atmic enquiry.

The results of quiescence of mind, etc., which are developed through Samadhi can also be obtained through Atma-Vichara or Atmic enquiry.

Manifold pains will arise in the mind in the absence of Samadhi which leads to the attainment of Brahmic Bliss.

Mental abnegation and control of Prana are the two requisites for the control of the mind, which leads to its quiescence Abandon ,the attraction towards sensual objects. You will net quiescence of mind.

Njirvanic bliss wherein all are Brahman only will re-sult through Jnana and Yoga.

All things, though appearing different, are no other than Brahmic Light.

Nothing can create differentiation and disturbance in the mind if you do not long for the fruits of actions.

The Jnana-vision alone will enable one to realise the Atman personally.

All will be Brahman through Sushupti-Mauna (spir-itual peace and silence consequent upon Self-realisa-tion). The same result can be attained through the giving up of Sanga or attachment.

The path to the higher goal will be rendered smooth by the preceptor who is able to make his disci-ple progress through various means, as well as by true renunciation, though many obstacles may intervene.

Renunciation of egoism alone constitutes the renunciation of everything. Doership or enjoyership arises through the idea of "I."

O Mokshapriya! I have given a resume of the whole Yoga-Vasishtha. Meditate on the sublime Truth and attain Self-realisation.

GIST OF THE VEDANTA

Vedantic Sadhana is given in a nutshell. How to get rid of illusion? The real nature of the individual soul is described.

Mokshapriya said:

O Blessed Gurudev! Please give me the e gist of Swami Vedanta.

Sivananda replied:

O Mokshapriya! You are imprisoned for a long in this cage of flesh on account of your identification with the body.

Cut this illusion with the sword of knowledge: "I am all-pervading Satchidananda Brahman," and be ever blissful.

You are bound by egoism in the form of "I am the doer." Recognise the truth: "I am not the doer." This knowledge will lead you to happiness. How can the Infi-nite without limbs be the agent or the doer?

O Child, Mokshapriya! Virtue and vice, pleasure and pain, are modes of the mind. Thou art independent of them. Thou art neither the doer nor the enjoyer. Thou art ever free.

Just as the juice of sugar-cane pervades the sugar produced from it, so also this Atman, or the pure Self pervades the entire world produced phenomenally in you.

In you the world is born, in you it exists, in you it dissolves, just as the pots return to clay, waves to water and rings to gold.

You are the pure Consciousness. The body, mind, heaven, hell, bondage, liberation and fear are merely imaginations. You have no relationship with them.

Be equal in pleasure and pain, in life and death, in praise and censure, in honour and dishonour in gain and loss. Thus enter into the Infinite or the Supreme Silence.

Renounce all desires through detachment and dis-crimination. Renounce the objects of the world. Renun-ciation of desires will follow. Thereafter live happily wherever thou pleasest.

A distaste for the objects of sense is freedom and attachment to the objects is bondage. This is wisdom.

Blessed is he who is established in his own Sat-chidananda Svarupa (Absolute-Nature). He is an Atmasamrat (Self-Emperor). The whole world will pay homage to this sage.

The mind of a Jivanmukta ceases to function. He is free from delusion and inertia. He experiences the in-describable state of Wisdom, and Immortal Bliss.

O Mokshapriya! Attain wisdom of the Self and be-come a Jivanmukta here and now. Be sincere in your endeavour.

Chapter VIII

UPASAMHARA

MOKSHAPRIYA ADDRESSES HIS GURU

Mokshapriya is in ecstasy. His doubts are cleared. His ignorance vanishes. He is enjoying the bliss of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Mokshapriya said:

O adorable Guru! Prostrations unto thee. I am ever grateful unto thee for thy precious spiritual instructions on all Yogas.

All my doubts have vanished. My Moha (delusion) and other evil Vrittis have disappeared. My mind is as pure as crystal. There is no oscillation. There is no Mala or impurity. There is no veil.

Your ways of imparting instructions are wonderful. They have penetrated my heart. They are direct, simple, lucid and forcible. I cannot find a teacher like you in the whole world. You are really a Jagad-Guru, World-Teacher.

My Ajnana has been burnt. Brahma-Jnana has dawned. I am ever happy and blissful. I am enjoying the eternal bliss of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

I cannot repay my debts to you even in crores of births. You have made me an Atma-Samrat (Self-Emperor). You have made me absolutely fearless. I have no Dakshina (sacred fee) with me to offer to you. I offer my mind-flower at your lotus-feet.

Through thy grace alone I have crossed easily this i terrible Samsara, with its formidable crocodiles of dis-eases, Vasanas, cravings, etc.

Crores of prostrations unto thee, O Venerable Preceptor! My salutations unto thee, O Swamin! My adorations unto thee, O Gurudev!

SWAMI SIVANANDA TO MOKSHAPRIYA

The Guru instructs the disciple on dissemination of spiritual knowledge.

O Mokshapriya! I am immensely pleased with you. You have followed my instructions implicitly, practised Sadhana rigorously and attained Self-realisation. You are indeed a praiseworthy Sadhaka.

Now, move about fearlessly and disseminate knowledge, Bhakti and the Yoga of selfless service.

Do not preach Vedanta to the masses. You will be doing immense harm. Vedanta is meant for the select few, for the microscopic minority.

For the masses teach Sankirtana-Bhakti Yoga, Japa, Namasmarana and the science of Karma Yoga. Hold Akhanda-Kirtana and religious conferences everywhere. Establish Yoga-Vedanta Centres in towns and cities.

Conduct classes on the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata and the Upanishads.

Make all people strong through the practice of Yoga-Asanas Bandhas, Mudras, Pranayama, Surya-"namaskaras and Danda-Baithak (native exercises).

Teach the four Yogas according to the temperament and capacity of the student. Do not give the same pill to all.

This is your Guru-Dakshina (sacred offering to the Guru).

Mokshapriya said:

O Adorable Gurudev! I shall act accordingly. Thy instructions are always soul-stirring and elevating.

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